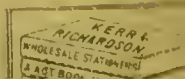


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JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE

IN

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EDINBURGH :
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JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE IN NORMANDY



W. Banks Del^d

W. R. LEAF SCULP^d

MONT ST MICHEL.

JOURNAL

OF

A RESIDENCE IN NORMANDY.

BY

J. AUGUSTUS ST JOHN, ESQ.

Sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo.

TACITUS.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR CONSTABLE & CO. EDINBURGH:

AND HURST, CHANCE, & CO. LONDON.

1831.



TO
WILLIAM MACLURE, ESQ.

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED,

BY
HIS SINCERE FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

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TOUR IN NORMANDY.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from England—Havre de Grace—Custom-House—Provisional Passports—Fair of Ingonville—Beauty of the Women—An Auberge—Passage of the Seine—Honfleur—The Côté de Grâce—The Diligence—Picturesque Scenery—Arrival at Caen at Midnight—The Hôtel d'Angleterre—Searching for Lodgings—Shops and Streets—Ruined Churches.

HAVING completed our arrangements for leaving England, we set out from London on Monday, 28th September, 1829. Arriving early next morning at Southampton, we embarked in the *Camille* steam-packet for France, and, about twelve o'clock at night, cast anchor before the quay of Havre de Grace. The moment we arrived in the harbour, the vessel was boarded by a troop of custom-house officers, as fierce as bull-dogs, who, under pretence of preventing smuggling, but in reality in order to extort bribes, prevented any packages or parcels being taken on shore. I heard a lady pleading to these male harpies for a little bag containing her night-dress, but in vain. Custom-house officers are proof against the

eloquence of beauty. While a hundred little dialogues were going on between these important men in office and the passengers, in very bad French, or broken English, every light on board was suddenly extinguished, and we had to grope our way on shore, as well as we could, in almost total darkness. This harbour regulation is meant, it seems, at once to prevent fires and smuggling. The former purpose it probably effects; but, for the latter, I can imagine no contrivance more likely to promote it. However, this is the business of the French Government,—a corporation which can never be accused of wilfully neglecting its own interests.

Among savages and barbarians, you receive the rites of hospitality even before your name or your country is demanded of you; but when a man passes from one civilized kingdom to another, he is always treated as little better than a thief. In the present instance, the first thing, of course, on landing, was to repair, with my wife and children, to be searched at the custom-house, where I, moreover, delivered up my passport. The officers of this establishment, like the old Romans, respect the majesty of youth, however, for my children were not searched. On emerging from this den into the streets, I had time to look about me, and began to be struck by the singular physiognomy of the city. It was considerably past midnight; and, except in the immediate vicinity of the quay, the streets were deserted and silent. The long rows of lamps extending between every double row of houses, having nobody to light, seemed to be burning for their own amusement, or just to enable us to find our way from the custom-house to our hotel.

It is a point not to be disputed, that, when one is hungry, it is extremely pleasant to have something to eat; and, therefore, I need not enlarge upon the satisfaction with which we, and a great many more of our seafaring companions, sat down to our delicious tea and coffee, with eggs, tongue, fowl, ham, and

roast beef. As to the price of these articles, we will discuss that point in another place, in order that we may allow no drop of gall to mingle with the fountain of our pleasures.

The next morning, we got our baggage passed through the custom-house, without any unusual degree of extortion; but had the mortification to lose two pieces of calico, for want of bribing the proper person with a few francs. This business over, we repaired to the prefecture, to obtain those provisional passports, in which the French government carries on a lucrative trade with strangers; and, being armed with this useless but costly piece of paper, we sallied forth, over one of the drawbridges thrown over the city moat, to view the fortifications and environs of Havre de Grace.*

The country in the vicinity of Havre is neither fertile nor picturesque, but it had the charm of novelty, and was basking, like a wild cat, in the sunshine, which was enough for me. There luckily happened to be a fair that day at Ingonville, a village a little to the south of the city walls; and, our business being to see whatever was to be seen, we of course repaired to it. There was, however, not much animation in the scene. The people drove sober bargains, sauntered about, looked at each other, and went their way, just as if it had been an affair of every day occurrence. The articles for sale were laid out very tastefully in booths, resembling those

* The wisdom of the good people of Havre was, in former times, very great, as may be inferred from the following history of a ship constructed here in 1533: — “ Le grand mâât avoit de cinq à six brasses de tour. Il portait quatre hunes, sur la première desquelles un homme ne paraissait plus avoir que la taille d’un enfant. Il y avoit dans ce navire une chapelle où l’on célébrait la messe, une forge, un jeu de paume, un moulin à vent, beaucoup de chambres, et de la place pour deux mille tonneaux. Il arriva, ce qu’on aurait pu prévoir, qu’il fut impossible de remuer ee colosse. On le mit en pièces; plusieurs maisons furent construites avec ses débris.” — M. LICQUET. *Rouen; Précis de son Histoire*, &c. p. 204.

of the September fair at Bristol; and the ground, being sloping, was dry and clean. The merchandise which most abounded consisted of female ornaments, — as bracelets, clasps, ear-rings, brooches, combs, &c. many of which were handsome and valuable. Fruit of all kinds was scanty and dear, — the country round Havre being, as I have said, barren, and but little cultivated. In the course of our morning's walk, we saw more pretty women and lovely children, than I had ever before seen in any country town, not excepting Worcester or Exeter. Their hair, especially, was exceedingly beautiful, generally chestnut or light auburn: but their skins were coarse.

Having to remain a night in the city, I left my hotel after tea, in order to take a stroll about the streets, and contemplate the features of the place by lamp-light. To one accustomed to the life and animation of the streets of London, or any other great English city, such a place as Havre must necessarily appear dull; but its lofty wooden houses, projecting over the streets, and almost meeting above our heads, its numerous quays, shops, hotels, &c. all possessing the air of novelty, rendered my walk sufficiently amusing. On the way home, I stepped into an auberge, being curious to observe the internal economy of such an establishment; but having drunk my wine, and chatted a little with the landlord, who was a civil, communicative fellow, I found there was nothing to be seen here, and retreated.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, we left Havre in the Houffleur packet;* but, before

* M. Licquet, who seems to have travelled through this part of the country before he described it — a practice often reversed — makes a very curious remark upon a custom which seems to have once prevailed on board the Houffleur packet. “*Tout près d'Houffleur,*” says he, “*sur la falaise la plus élevée, nous apercevons une chapelle dédiée à Marie. Si le patron du steam-boat a conservé l'antique usage, il se placera sur l'amont, ôtera le premier son chapeau, et invitera les passagers à se recommander à Notre Dame de Grâce. Le naufrage d'un paquebot en cet endroit a donné lieu, dit-on, à cette coutume religieuse.*”

we had got fairly out of the harbour, were nearly run down by an American brig, owing to the extreme unskilfulness and stupidity of the master. The passage across the Seine, though short, was rough and disagreeable, and most of the children on board were sea-sick.

As we drew near the Honfleur side of the river, a very striking change was observable in the character of the scenery, the hills being lofty, and covered with trees and beautiful verdure down to the water's edge. Before us, on one hand, was the town, which, like most very old places, looked picturesque at a distance; and, on the other, the Côté de Grâce, with its romantic beauties of scenery, and ancient chapel of Our Lady, which appeared to have been erected there merely to enhance the charms of the landscape. On landing, we found the streets narrow, crooked, and, though steep, extremely dirty. Most of the houses were of wood, painted in front with alternate broad stripes of black and white, in some cases oblique, in others perpendicular; and age and decay seemed to have seized upon them all. It was from this town, according to the President de Brosser, and the Abbé Prevost, that, in the year 1503, Paulovier Gonville sailed on that voyage, during which he discovered the northern coasts of New Holland. But, at present, Honfleur sends out no ships on distant expeditions, and seems, in a great measure, to have lost whatever naval importance it may formerly have possessed.

About half past three o'clock in the afternoon, we set out from Honfleur in the diligence for Caen.

Le tableau que présente alors le paquebot, est à la fois solennel et touchant. A peine le pilote a parlé, que les conversations s'arrêtent; tout le monde se découvre; un silence profond s'établit; on n'entend plus, pendant quelques instans, que le bruissement des vagues, et le murmure de la prière."—*Rouen*, &c. p. 313. All this looks exceedingly romantic in print, but it does not take place. The captain of the steam-boat *has not preserved the ancient custom*; and, in fact, all this sort of foolery is abandoned to the old women. When men pray in Normandy, they pray to God.

Every body has heard of French diligences, but no one, except those who have seen them, can possibly imagine how ugly and lumbering they are. The reader, however, who has beheld those *elegant* vehicles in which wild beasts are conveyed from one country fair to another in England, will be able to form a conception somewhat approaching the thing, though not, by any means, coming up to it. In this singular machine, the invention of which must have preceded that of Noah's ark, off we set, with great flourishing and cracking of whips, along one of the worst, but most picturesque, roads I have ever beheld. Autumn, "with his gold hand," had already begun to gild the leaves of the trees, which clustered beautifully about the summit of every hill, along the side, or among the foldings of which, the road lay. While our caravan was toiling up one of these eminences, I got out, and walked on before it. The scenery, on all sides, was singularly lovely: richly wooded valleys, streams, copses, and brown autumnal woods, smiling in the evening sun, met the eye, and refreshed the imagination. On the sides of the roads were numerous blackberry bushes, covered with their wild fruit, which, with a total disregard of the rights of the Norman sparrows, who chattered and looked on me with terror, I employed myself for a full quarter of an hour in picking for the inmates of the travelling house which was creeping after me.

When we had reached the top of the hill, I got again into the vehicle, which now moved on at a more rapid pace, through a country thickly covered with apple-trees, the fruit of which lay profusely strewn upon the grass and the sides of the road. The trees are generally planted in quincunx, and, being nearly of the same height, and spreading like an umbrella, have the uniform appearance of a Quaker's plantation. In Devonshire, Herefordshire, and the other cider counties of England, I never observed this uniformity in the vast orchards through which I have passed. Night now came on very rapidly, and the

wind dying away with the light, our den became suffocatingly hot, and was compared, by one of the ladies, to the Black Hole at Calcutta. However, we continued to amuse ourselves, as well as we could, by uttering invectives against the diligence and the roads, which seemed to have entered into a conspiracy to shake us to pieces. Of Pont l'Evêque, and the other places through which we passed, in the course of the evening, we could see nothing, except what was visible from the windows of our vehicle, which, it should be remarked, always moved more rapidly through a town than on the solitary highway.

After a journey, which every body pronounced dull and tedious, we reached Caen* about midnight. As this was to be our place of residence, our home, as it were, for many months, we anxiously scrutinized, through the windows, the appearance of the streets, which, at that hour, was peculiarly sombre and striking,—the houses being dark and lofty, and the lamps, swinging from ropes over the middle of the road, flinging their dim light over the silent and deserted scene. Instead of stopping at an hotel or inn, where we might have got supper and a bed, the lumbering vehicle drew up before a kind of office, where common civility was not to be met with. The evening, unfortunately, was rainy and dark; and the

* On the origin and signification of the name of Caen, antiquarians are still undecided. Dr Dibdin, who is generally out in his conjectures, imagines, that, in Latin, it should be *Cadomi*, which is merely a grammatical inflexion of the word *Cadomus*, or *Cadomum*. The reasonings of archæologists, on subjects of this kind, are more ingenious than amusing, and could possess but little interest to an English reader. The sum of the matter, however, is, that nothing at all is known upon the subject. Dibdin, who seems to have a passion for contradiction, says, that the Saxons appear to have made no settlements here; but the Abbé de la Rue, who, although a dull writer, has been very industrious in his researches, and is as learned as his antagonist is the reverse, imagines himself to have proved the contrary. I am certainly of the Abbé's opinion.—See *Essais Historiques sur la Ville de Caen*, &c. tome I.

moment we arrived, the diligence was surrounded, — I might almost say besieged, — by a mob of low waiters, from the various hotels of the city, each of whom endeavoured to lay violent hands upon our luggage, as it was taken down from the roof of the coach, loudly vociferating all the while the praises of the establishment to which he, or she, (for there were many women among them,) happened to belong. It was with the utmost difficulty that I prevented our trunks and parcels from being carried off to different hotels; or, for ought I knew, by thieves, who might choose to mingle in the crowd. It was a scene at which any body, but the persons concerned, might have died with laughter. With one hand, I was compelled to seize the arm of a strapping wench, who had taken up my *sac de nuit*, and was about to be off with it, without inquiring or caring to whom it belonged, but calculating that the owner would follow his baggage; while, with the other, I had to lay hold of a porter, who, with indescribable *sang froid*, had put my portmanteau on his shoulder, with the same laudable intention. My tongue, not at all used to the dialect, was, in the meanwhile, actively employed in denouncing the whole rabble, in English or French, just as the one or the other came uppermost; and, at length, by dint of a great deal of gesticulation and fierce looks, I succeeded in disengaging my various packages, and in piling them up, in one heap, in the mud.

By this time, we appeared to understand one another; and the porters, perceiving that I would have my own way, stood quietly waiting for orders. After hearing the names of the various hotels, I chose that *d'Angleterre*, rather from national instinct, I suppose, than any intelligible motive of preference. To the Hôtel d'Angleterre, therefore, we proceeded, with our children in our hands, through the dark, muddy streets, but comforting ourselves with the thought, that, in a few minutes, we should be seated at the tea-table, before a cheerful, blazing fire. We had no sooner entered the inn, however, than various cir-

cumstances of evil omen presented themselves. The mistress of the house and her attendants looked as drowsy and spiritless as if they had been keeping watch for a month over the Seven Sleepers; and the chambermaid, who undertook to light us to our apartments, seemed in some danger of falling asleep by the way. The very sight of the staircase startled us. Instead of a fine boarded flight of stairs, with rich carpeting, confined by bright brass rods, we discovered a dismal series of stone steps, dripping wet, and ascending between walls exactly in the same predicament. The suspicion might now have entered our heads, that, like young Marlowe in Goldsmith's comedy, we had mistaken a castle for an inn, if it had not been that the broad-faced, sturdy being in petticoats, who marched before us, candle in hand, acted as a complete check upon our imaginations.

When we had reached our chamber, an immense lofty room, hung with crimson drapery, we sat down patiently for some time, waiting for the delicious coffee, fowl, ham, &c. which our hungry fancy had long been feasting on; but, finding that no waiter made his appearance, and that the noises were dying away in the lower part of the house, we began to suspect that the people, who, I suppose, had supped, were quietly going to bed, without troubling themselves any farther about us. Upon ringing for one of the chambermaids, I found that this was actually the case. There was neither milk nor cream in the house—it was too late to get any—and coffee without either was out of the question. Fowls, wine, &c. she informed us, we might have; but we were now out of temper, and nothing would do. Upon my complaining to the servant of this stupid piece of neglect and mismanagement, observing that the children were hungry, and would feel the want of the coffee, she replied, with infinite composure, that “they would go to sleep, and forget it!”—which, of course, they did.

Next morning, feeling no disposition whatever to

remain at this ill-managed hotel, I set out early, in search of furnished lodgings in a private house. After heavy rain, when the streets are running deep with mud, and those who pass to and fro are bedabbled to their waists, the appearance of a large city is far from being prepossessing. The moment one looks abroad on Caen, however, one is struck by the size and loftiness of the houses, the greater number of which are of stone; although here and there, in the more ancient quarters of the town, an old painted wooden house, with its carved window frames, and gable end towards the street, meets the eye. The shops are numerous and large, and several of those in the principal streets have fine light windows, and the goods are neatly disposed, after the English fashion, though, in most cases, the economy of the shopkeepers might be very much improved. Those who exhibit most taste and elegance are the mercers, linendrapers, and milliners, in whose windows, muslins, lace, and rich silk dresses, are ingeniously displayed, to tempt the eye of the ladies. The booksellers are the most slovenly and heedless of external decoration. Indeed, one may walk a long time about Caen, before one discovers that it possesses a bookseller's shop at all, nothing being visible in the windows of the most respectable but a few tawdry prints and toys, such as commonly adorn those of a country stationer in England.

When we first arrived, observing that many of the tradesmen lived, as it were, *sub Jove*, in shops altogether without fronts, we began to infer from this circumstance, that the winters must be exceedingly mild here, and, had we departed immediately, this would have been the impression on our minds; but, when the hard weather came on, I saw many of these poor windowless citizens perishing with cold in their shops, or keeping soul and body together by burying themselves beneath mountains of clothes, with *chaufferettes* under their feet, and chafing-dishes upon their counters to thaw their fingers. The Normans appear to entertain a great partiality for living in the

open air. In the villages, in the towns, nay, even in the cities, you every day see people sitting before their doors working, especially the lace-makers,* who may absolutely be said to line the streets of Caen, so great is their number, and so inveterate their passion for shewing themselves.

Among the most prominent features of Caen, is the number of deserted churches and chapels which everywhere meets the eye. Here, we find the holy edifice turned into a kind of bazar; there, into a warehouse, or granary, or stable; while, in a third place, the smoke of a smith's forge may be observed issuing from those fretted windows, whence the vapour of incense once stole upon the air. This, if it be regarded, as I think it must, as an indication of the indifference of the people for religion, is a very melancholy sight, calculated to give strangers an unfavourable idea of the Norman character. To whom the blame is to be attributed, I cannot determine: the priests accuse the liberals; the liberals accuse the priests; and a stranger may, perhaps, suspect that both have had a hand in it.

But, if many churches have thus fallen to ruin, or been degraded to vile uses, there are still a great number remaining, whose lofty spires, and magnificent foreign architecture, confer an air of grandeur upon the city. I say, foreign architecture; because I am convinced, that the church style of building, call it Gothic, or Norman, or Saxon, or what you please, is purely oriental, since no resemblance to it can be

* With regard to the number of lace-makers in Caen, I have been able to learn nothing exact. Dr Dibdin, from hearsay, says twenty thousand; his French translator, thirty thousand; M. Boisard, in his *Annuaire du Calvados*, observes, that there are at least fifty thousand in the department, but does not specify the number employed at Caen or Bayeux. As the whole population of Caen does not exceed thirty-nine thousand, I should imagine, that, at the utmost, the number engaged in lace-making cannot exceed seven or eight thousand. M. Licquet must have been dreaming in the open air when he spoke of thirty thousand.

traced in the civil or military architecture of the northern barbarians, who reared the majority of these structures. When we compare these fine temples with the human dwellings around them, although, as I have said, the latter are far from being mean or despicable, we are almost tempted to imagine, indeed, that not only has the style of architecture been borrowed, but the architects also, and the hands by which they were reared,—so vast is the disparity. It is to its churches, in fact, that Caen owes its principal beauty. View it from whatever point of the vicinity you please, you can never fail to be struck with the number and grandeur of its sacred edifices, especially when the rich hues of sunrise or sunset are glowing on their lofty pinnacles, and on the windows and roofs of the subjacent houses.

CHAPTER II.

Taking a House—Coarseness of Manners—The Calvaries—The Public Promenades—Vicinity of Caen—French Leases—Sarrazin, or Buck-Wheat—Mr Armstrong, the Factotum of the English at Caen—Cornelles le Royal—Road to the Village—The Curé—House at Cormelles.

ALTHOUGH I had determined to make Caen my head-quarters for some time, it was a fortnight at least before I could discover a suitable residence. In the meanwhile, I perambulated the city and its environs in all directions, noting the appearance of its various quarters, and endeavouring, from the healthful or squalid looks of the inhabitants, to judge of the elasticity and salubrity of the air. During these walks, my eyes and nose perpetually informed me, that the people of Caen were not remarkable for taste or delicacy,—all the pleasant little paths in the neighbourhood of the town,—every spot from whence a pleasant view might be obtained, together with the

alleys, bye-streets, and even the environs of the churches and public places, being covered with filth. Other little traits of manners, corroborative of the same impression, every day obtruded themselves upon my notice. Here, indeed, would Alexander the Great have found ample reasons to be convinced of his mortality. In the hotels and lodging houses, moreover, families will find sufficient reason for determining to hasten, as fast as possible, their establishment in houses of their own.

One Sunday, shortly after my arrival, being desirous of observing in what manner the Sabbath is kept by the peasants of Normandy, I took out my family into the fields, and strolled towards the village, on the road to Bayeux. Volney remarks, that, on his arrival at Alexandria, he was forcibly struck with the inadequacy of verbal description to convey to the mind a distinct idea of the appearance of a foreign city; for that, in the scene before him, he could recognize no resemblance to the accounts he had read. On a small scale, I may say the same thing. I certainly had never read any description of France which gave me a clear conception of its features, physical or moral. On the present occasion, one of the most striking objects which presented themselves, was an immense cross,* not less than fifty feet high, painted with reddish brown, like the post of a gate. It stood upon a small stone platform, about seven feet high, to which you ascended by steps. Upon this cross was a wooden image of the Saviour, painted the colour of life, or rather of death, and having a vast mass of curly black hair, hanging down profusely

* These calvaries, as they are called, were thrown down during the Revolution; but a portion of the clergy has injudiciously exerted itself in restoring them. They may now be seen, like the idols of antiquity, upon the heights, and on the roadsides, in every part of the country, where they are kneeled to by the women, and laughed at by the men. The greater number of them are of wood; but one occasionally meets with an old cross of stone, manufactured before the Revolution, and preserved by the superstition of the peasantry.

over the neck and brow. Streams of blood were represented trickling over the forehead from beneath the crown of thorns, from the spear wound in the side, and from the feet and hands. As far as I could judge, the figure was rather cleverly executed. Two spears, the one having a piece of sponge on its point, the other naked, sprung up from the trunk of the cross, beneath the feet of the figure, and, touching the cross-beam, on each side beyond the extended hands, formed a kind of triangle, with the base uppermost, within which the figure was completely enclosed. The single word "Jesus" was written on the cross-beam over the head of the statue.

As I gazed at this vast idol, for to a protestant it appears no better, standing up against the sky, and saw the body relieved, as it were, upon a back-ground of light driving clouds, a sublime feeling swept across my mind. The awful scene, which this rude representation was meant to recall to memory, was suddenly and vividly painted upon my imagination, and I began to think, that perhaps the catholics were not altogether wrong in setting up these calvaries. My eye, however, and my mind, have now become familiar with them, and I pass them as coolly as I would pass a milestone; and this appears also to be the case with most other persons, whether protestant or catholic. The purpose, therefore, for which they are erected is not answered.

Nevertheless, externally, some small degree of respect is shewn. During the short time we stopped to look at this cross, numbers of persons, of both sexes, and of all ages, passed by; some in their Sunday clothes, others dressed as on any other day of the week. The first person who performed the act of idolatry was an old woman, who, crossing her forehead and her heart, and fixing her eyes upon the ground, passed by, bending the head in adoration. A little girl next went by: she crossed her forehead also, and, touching the region of the heart devoutly, curtsied, and proceeded on her way. Then came a crowd of

persons, of different ages, whom I carefully observed. Of two little boys, who were running along playing, the elder seemed to recollect himself suddenly, as he came opposite the image, pulled off his cap, and, turning to his little brother, a child apparently of four years of age, caused him to follow his example. Both then passed bareheaded ; but immediately returned to their play, and laughed and sported as merrily as before. All the women touched their hearts, or crossed their foreheads ; but many of the men passed without shewing the least sign of reverence. It was not the least curious part of the matter, to notice what was passing in our own minds. We respected those who performed the duties of their religion ; we disapproved of the conduct of those who did not. The character of the action, in a philosophical point of view, was not considered. At length, we observed a soldier drawing near, on his way from the village to the city, and we were curious to observe what he would do, for we were aware that the Jesuits had for many years been actively employed in catholicizing the army. He walked on so far without making any sign, that we concluded he would pass the image without taking any notice of it ; and one of my companions said, " Oh ! he is of the old republican school. Observe how disdainfully he looks up at it." Just as he came opposite the cross, however, he put up his hand, and touched his cap, in the most respectful manner, as if to his superior officer. After this exhibition, we continued our walk.

In examining the immediate vicinity of Caen, the *Cours*, or public promenades, are sure to attract the attention of a stranger. The principal of these walks, called the *Cours de la Reine*, was along the right bank of the Orne, from a little above the Vancelles bridge, towards the village of Allemagne, and is shaded by fine rows of magnificent elms, planted, according to the bishop of Avranches, in his "*Origines de Caen*," in the year 1691, at the expense of the city. The other walk strikes off in a trans-

verse direction, from the lower extremity of the Cours de la Reine, along the ancient walls of the city, towards the point where the theatre now stands. This promenade, called, I know not why, the *Quatre Carabins*, is more ancient than the other, the trees which overshadow it having been planted in 1676. These noble walks, resembling those of Kensington Gardens, extend round two sides of a space consisting of large level meadows, kept constantly green by the river. Here, in fine weather, the fashionable world of Caen take the air, some on horseback, others on foot; and it is here, perhaps, that one sees to most advantage the fine women of Normandy, their complexion being, according to a well known law of optics, rendered doubly brilliant by the vast masses of green which surround them. At one end of the *Quatre Carabins*, is a coffeehouse, which must certainly have been baptized by some Cockney, for, over the door, is painted, in letters of no small dimensions, the words "*Café de Wauxhall*," to the no small amusement of the English, who take the air upon this walk.

The country round Caen consists almost entirely of elevated plains, or downs, destitute of trees, and swept, in their whole extent, by every wind that blows. One of our English travellers, speaks of having enjoyed from a certain point, on the road to the *Delivrande*, a prospect which would have delighted the "old masters;" but either his eye must have been refreshed by that optical illusion, called in India the *Suhote*, or *Chittram*, which represents hills and palaces, where there is nothing but mist, or he must be ignorant of what constitutes a landscape. The pencil of Claude Lorraine himself could make nothing of such scenery. It is precisely like a Hampshire down; more fertile, perhaps, but not half so picturesque as Dartmoor, the beauties of which Mr Carrington has so enthusiastically celebrated.

These downs, however, if not beautiful, are exceedingly well cultivated, and would be still more so,

if the present short leases of nine years were doubled or trebled. On this subject I had one day a very interesting conversation with a Norman farmer. In crossing the high plains to the north of the city, I observed this man at plough, and, being desirous of ascertaining how the Triptolemean process was performed in this part of the world, I went up to him, to examine his movements. Being a good-natured, communicative fellow, he stopped his plough on seeing me approach, in order to chat with me. I first inquired of him why the land in this part of the plain was not enclosed, like some other parts within sight, and learned that it belonged to some Hospice in or about Caen, the regulations of which required that it should be kept as a sort of common. He observed, moreover, that even were it not so, it would never be worth while for any farmer to be at the expense of enclosing or greatly improving it, because the inevitable consequence, at the end of his nine years' lease, would be an increase of rent. Thus the man would be doubly a loser by his enterprize. As it is, he derives all the advantage he can from the land at the least possible expense. Upon my observing to him, that with us leases are sometimes granted for ninety-nine, and seldom for less than twenty-one years, he seemed to be overwhelmed with astonishment, and exclaimed, that, "In that case, a man might indeed see the beginning of his lease, but could never see the end; and that by the time it was expired, the owners would forget it, and the land would become the farmer's own property!"

On another part of the common I saw several flails at work, thrashing out the *sarrazin*,* or buck-

* Mr Turner, who, if not an amusing, is at least a learned and sensible writer, has the following remark upon the name of this grain:—"Tradition, founded principally upon the French name of this plant, *sarrazin*, has given rise to a general belief that buck-wheat was introduced into France by the Moors; but this opinion has, of late, been ably combated. The plant is not to be found in Arabia, Spain, or Sicily, the countries more

wheat, the corn from which that villainous black bread, which one sees for sale in every street in Caen, is made. The plough, and other implements of agriculture, have not, I imagine, been greatly improved in this country since the days of Arthur Young; and therefore, a description of them, even if at all intelligible, would, to say the least of it, be extremely useless. The plough now before me, however, seemed to be an exceedingly neat implement of its kind, and I said so to my friend the farmer, who was pleased at the compliment, and replied, "She goes well, sir." It was the first time I had observed that a plough is of the feminine gender; but my friend seemed to be a kind of an amateur, and spoke of his plough with as much affection as a true bred sailor speaks of his ship, or Sancho Panza of his ass Dapple.

After vainly traversing the whole city of Caen, and several of the villages in the neighbourhood, in search of a house, for I could see none that would suit me, some being too large, others too small, I recollected having heard a gentleman in the steam-packet mention the name of a Mr Armstrong, who, he said, was always ready to furnish strangers with every species of information of which they might stand in need. But there are about forty thousand persons in Caen, and I had not received the gentleman's address. Upon inquiry, however, I found that every body knew Mr Armstrong, and half a score of persons at least offered to conduct me to his house. I now found that this gentleman was a banker, money-changer, house and packet agent, wine merchant,—in one word, the *factotum* of the English residents, many of the most respectable of whom

particularly inhabited by Mahometans; and in Brittany it still passes by the Celtic appellation, *had-razin*, signifying *red-corn*, of which words *sarrazin* may fairly be regarded as a corruption, as *buck-wheat*, in our own tongue, ought unquestionably to be written *beeck-wheat*; a term synonymous to what it is called in Latin and German."—*Letter from Normandy*, vol. ii. p. 152.

may every day be seen in his office, chatting with each other, or with the owner. Here we saw bills of all the houses, furnished or unfurnished, which were to be let in the city, or its vicinity, and were politely furnished with whatever information we required respecting the terms and mode of letting, and immediately discovered the sort of house we wanted, in a village about two miles from the town. To save themselves a world of trouble, strangers arriving at Caen, should at once have recourse to this gentleman, who not only possesses the power, but likewise the disposition, to serve them.*

After remaining a fortnight in lodgings, we removed to our village *Cormelles le Royal*, a place by no means calculated, I fear, to become the rival in romance of Miss Mitford's. According to the Abbé Delarue, the epithet *Royal* was anciently bestowed upon this hamlet, on account of the privileges which the kings of France, and, still earlier, perhaps, the Dukes of Normandy, granted to its inhabitants. These privileges, which consisted in exemption from all imposts, aids, or military service, were confirmed by Philippe de Valois, by letters patent, in 1347, and appear to have been originally granted upon condition that the inhabitants should keep guard at the Millet gate of Caen, whenever the King or the Duke of Normandy happened to be in the city. Small and insignificant as Cormelles is, it has produced two men distinguished in their day for their literary acquirements,—Gilles André de la Roque, historiographer to the king, and knight of the order of St Michael; and Bardou, curé of the parish, member of the "Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres," and author of numerous pieces of fugitive poetry.

This village, in which there are five or six houses adapted to become the residence of English families,

* Since our arrival a newsroom has been established, exclusively for the English, by Mr Armstrong, to which a large number of the respectable residents are subscribers.

lies on the east side of Caen, nearly midway between the roads to Falaise and Honfleur. It is approached through a long avenue of fir and poplar trees, newly planted, which in summer will have a very pleasant appearance. On both sides of the road are high level downs, extending eastward from the Orne, as far as the eye can reach, covered in summer with sarrazin, and in winter with one vast sheet of snow, which, during the past season, was blown up into ridges, resembling the small waves of a sea suddenly frozen. Over this black plain the north wind sweeps almost unremittingly, during the winter months, sometimes lifting up the snow, and dashing it, like the spray of the sea, against any object which may happen to interrupt its violence, at others, driving the fine and almost impalpable atoms with monotonous force along the billowy plain. In the bitter days of last winter, as (armed to the teeth in tartan) I passed to and fro from Caen over this road, I was frequently greatly amused by listening to this singular noise, resembling the whistling sound which the wind makes when blowing through a grove of pine trees, though not exactly, for there was added a certain, I know not what, which ever accompanies small bodies in progressive motion. I here noticed a greater crispness and hardness in the snow than I had ever before remarked; and when the sun, which seemed to harden, not to melt it, shone in unclouded brightness upon the scene, every little snowy eminence assumed that pinky hue which Rousseau speaks of having observed on the peaks of the Alps. I dare say, that wherever the air is particularly clear, the same phenomenon is visible; but I do not remember to have remarked it in England, or even among the snowy mountains of Wales.

The house we occupied at Cormelles is the property of Mr Macpharlane, the curé of the parish, an Irishman, and formerly parish priest of Castleknock, near Dublin. He had been educated at Caen, where his uncle held a distinguished place in the University,

but, like most other priests, quitted France on the breaking out of the Revolution. After thirty years' residence in his own country, however, he returned to Normandy, where he obtained from the government the cure of Cormelles. To eke out the scanty stipend allowed to a clergyman of inferior rank in France, he receives a few pupils, chiefly from Ireland. These, together with a niece, a young lady of eighteen, and Captain Daly, an old Irish officer of great piety and learning, might be said to constitute the curé's family.

Our house, for which we paid twenty pounds a-year, unfurnished, was large and commodious, with stables, coach-house,* &c. and had a large garden both behind and before, well stocked with wall and other fruit trees, the whole surrounded by lofty walls. Next door was a smaller house, likewise belonging to the curé, occupied by a gentleman who had left England with me for Normandy. The remainder of the inhabitants of the village, one English family excepted, which soon after our arrival removed to Caen, were French, of whom none but the mayor were above the rank of peasants. Excepting the curé's family, therefore, our society was at Caen, which I generally visited once a-day during all weathers.

* During the government of Napoleon, this house and the next were a beet-root sugar manufactory, which did not succeed. It was next converted into an ordinary sugar refinery, but with no better success. The manufacture of sugar from beet-root, a favourite fancy with the French, is still carried on at Mathieu, a small village in the canton of Douvras, near the sea-shore.

CHAPTER III.

Living in a Norman Village—Grave of Bochart—Burial of Heretics—Manners of the Peasantry—Brandy Drinking—Winter Costume—Curious custom of the Lace-makers—Forests of Normandy—Burning of Coal—Prejudices of the French—Wooden Shoes—The Chaufferette—Female Peasantry—Making Love—The Trousseau—Early Rising—Village Church—Public Library of Caen.

It is difficult to conceive any thing more striking than the contrast between the mode of living in London, and that which prevails in a Norman village. In the former, your time is occupied with operas, parties, club-houses, and every other excitement which civilization can furnish; in the latter, none of these interrupts your quiet. Here, therefore, you do as you please, free from the tyranny of fashion. On the other hand, unless you can create amusement for yourself, you will have none. Even at Caen there is no resource for the idler but billiards and newspapers, which, as far as I can discover, consume all the time the English in that city can spare from eating and drinking.

I had not been many days at Cormelles before I learned that Bochart, the celebrated author of the *Geographia Sacra*, and many other learned works, was buried there, almost at the foot of my garden. Miss Dawson, the curé's niece, undertook to shew me the grave. I found the spot in the corner of a little field, which had formerly been a grove, the property of Bochart's family. No mound or stone of any kind marked the grave; but a few low trees, or flowering shrubs, waved over the narrow house, their leaves falling and whirling about in the wind. Why Bochart was not buried in consecrated ground I have not learned; but I suspect it was because he was a

protestant. The regulations of the catholic church, respecting the burial of heretics, are remarkable for their bigotry: should a protestant die in any part of France, where his sect had no cemetery of their own, he could not, according to the decisions of the church, be interred in consecrated ground; because a catholic cemetery would be thought to be polluted by his corpse, which, if deposited there, might, if recognized, be dug up, and cast out of the sacred precincts. Even after this had been done, no catholic would be interred, until the ground had been re-consecrated, by a sprinkling of Gregorian water; that is, ordinary holy water, mingled with salt, wine, and ashes, called Gregorian because the use of it is prescribed in the sacramentary of St Gregory.*

Returning from Caen early in the evening, perhaps before eight o'clock, I used generally to observe every house shut up, and lights in the upper windows, indicating that the peasants were retiring to rest. In fact, during cold weather, they are most commonly in bed long before that hour. They have, indeed, no motive for sitting up late, the day being long enough for labour, and candle and firewood being extremely dear. Their modes of defending themselves from the cold are various. In the first place, every person in the country, male and female, that can get it, cheer themselves with *cau de vie*, the smell of which you may always discover as they pass you. In the next place, they clothe themselves, the women especially, with the thickest and heaviest garments; it being not at all uncommon for a woman

* *Code Ecclesiastique Français*, tome ii. p. 419. — Another part of the *Code* informs us, that *by law* every French subject, of whatever creed, may have the advantage of being buried in consecrated ground, by hedging or walling off a portion of the catholic cemetery, and making a separate entrance. These regulations, however, do not date farther back than the year II. of the Republic, when catholicism was on the wane in France. Usurers, suicides, and duellists, who are more despicable than either, are not allowed Christian burial.

to wear seven petticoats. They moreover wear, under the *chemise*, very thick knit flannel waistcoats, called *tricots*, with long sleeves, which come down to the wrists, and are turned up over those of the gown: these tricots, as well as every other article of female apparel, are generally of some very showy colour, as blue, red, &c. Even the frocks and trousers of the farmers, and the pinafores of children, are of a light bright blue.

Another mode of procuring warmth, common among the peasantry, and not altogether unknown in some parts of England, is, to take refuge in the cow-houses and stables, where the breath of the cattle diffuses an agreeable warmth through the building. At Lions-sur-Mer, and other villages on the sea-coast, the lace-makers resort to the same curious practice to save fuel. They agree with some farmer, who has several cows in warm winter quarters, to be allowed to carry on their operations in company with the "milky mothers." The cows are tethered in a row, on one side of the apartment; and the lace-makers are seated cross-legged upon the ground, on the other, with their feet buried in straw. Opposite each girl, in a small niche in the wall, is a candle, placed behind a clear hemispherical bottle, the flat side of which is towards the candle, and the globular one towards the knitter. This bottle is filled with water, and throws a small stream of strong, pure, white light upon the cushion, which renders the minutest thread of the lace more visible, if possible, than by day. These cow-houses being generally too dark to allow of their ever working without candles, and the cattle being sometimes out in the fields by day, the lace-makers prefer working all night. Numbers of young men, of their own rank, resort to these cow-houses, and sit or lie down in the straw, by the cushions of their sweethearts, and sing, tell stories, or say soft things to them all night, to cheer them in their labours. The curé of the place, anxious lest the morals of his pretty parishioners should suffer,

has more than once endeavoured to keep away the lovers, but in vain. To avoid, however, all real ground for scandal, the mothers and elderly female relations of many of the girls remain with them all night, pursuing the same occupation.

In the city of Caen, during the last terrible winter, when several persons were frozen to death in their beds, the poor were permitted, during several hours of the day, to warm themselves at the fires of the hospital, as, according to Aristophanes, the poor of Athens resorted, during winter, to the stoves of the public baths. Firewood is every year becoming scarcer and dearer in Normandy, as well as in the other parts of France; and it is certain, that the inhabitants will soon be compelled to conquer their stupid prejudices, and burn coal. In 1811, it was calculated that, in the department of Calvados, the richest and best cultivated in France, there were 37,000 hectares of land covered with forest, or one-fifteenth part of the whole department. Since that period, the forests have been rapidly diminishing,*

* Dr Dibdin, an amusing, but excessively hasty and incorrect, writer, says, that the French *never* think of planting trees for fuel, either in the neighbourhood of populous cities, or elsewhere; but, if this be the case, how have they managed to get fuel for the last two thousand years? The Doctor's information is extremely incorrect: he says, that, in the arrondissement of Caen, there are only three hundred and forty-four hectares of forest, whereas there are *four thousand* hectares. — *Annuaire de Calvados*, 1829, p. 82. There are, moreover, a great number of young plantations in various parts of Normandy; but whether they are sufficiently numerous, is more than I can determine. The government regulates the cutting of wood in the great forests, and will, I trust, take care that the people shall not want fuel. Coal mines are beginning to be opened, and worked actively, in some cantons:—“ La mine de Littry vivifie tout le pays qui l'environne. Cet immense établissement, dirigé par de mains aussi habiles que prudentes, jouit d'une prospérité que s'accroît de jour en jour. Les routes nombreuses qui traversent l'arrondissement, et dont plusieurs ont été établies aux frais des propriétaires de la mine, ouvrent dans tous les sens des débouchés à ses produits. La commune de Littry, qui compte déjà plus de 1800 habitants, et qui doit aux administrateurs de cette mine,

and at present, I believe, there is a pretty general conviction, that the wood will not long supply the consumption of the inhabitants. Last autumn, just after our arrival, the first Newcastle coals ever seen at Caen were brought thither for the use of the English. There is, moreover, a coal mine at Littry, three leagues beyond Bayeux, which at present is actively worked, and is said to be extremely productive. The coals are much inferior in quality to those from the north of England; but their reputation is every day increasing; the roads to and from the mines are continually thronged with carts and wagons; and the place, which was at first a wretched village, is rapidly starting up into a wealthy town. Nevertheless, the prejudice against coal continues very strong at Caen. Dr Bennett, the protestant clergyman, told me, that he had received notice to quit his house, *because he burned coal*; and another English gentleman at Caen, who had invited a large party, finding his drawing-room very thin, and inquiring the reason, found that the French had staid away, *because it was understood he burned coal*. What renders the preference for wood fires more astonishing is, that, besides giving much less heat than coal, they are far more expensive; but prejudice, we see, is stronger than avarice, even among Frenchmen.

To return, however, to the peasants. Their feet are defended from the rigour of the weather by their *sabots*, or wooden shoes, which are formed of one solid piece of beech, hollowed out to fit the foot. These shoes are raised from the ground by very high heels, and a corresponding thickness in the fore part of the sole. Besides these, a thick sock of felt is worn, which at once increases the warmth of the

entre autres institutions utiles qu'ils entretiennent, deux écoles primaires, dont l'une est dirigée par les Dames de Providence et l'autre d'après la méthode de Lancaster, deviendra sous peu d'années d'une haute importance. Le marché, qui y a été établi en 1823, est déjà un des plus considerables du Bessin." *Annuaire du Calvados*, tome II. p. 37, 38.

sabot, and prevents it from rubbing the foot; and, with the country belles, who have a particular passion for finery, this sock is of a scarlet colour. The sabots are kept upon the foot by a strap of black polished leather, which passes over the neck of the foot, and is nailed below beneath the instep. Add to all these contrivances, the chaufferette, which every woman, rich and poor, in Normandy, constantly uses, during cold weather, even in church. The chaufferette is a square wooden box, pierced at the top, lined with tin, and filled with burning *braise*, a species of charcoal, which diffuses a pleasant warmth, without causing headach.

It is not an uncommon thing, I was informed, for the women in the lower ranks to have children before marriage; and, with one or two natural children, they find no more difficulty in getting husbands than they do, under similar circumstances, in Tartary or Thibet, and are received among their fair sisterhood, whether before or after marriage, exactly as if they had kept themselves chaste. Their manners and conversation, moreover, are remarkably coarse. Among women of a higher rank, personal surveillance is not considered unnecessary. During courtship, the mother generally sits in the room with the lovers; walks out with them; goes to church with them; and, in one word, never quits her daughter's side, until she is fairly married. The other day, in a match where the lover was French, the mistress English, the gentleman, some time after he had obtained permission to pay his addresses, petitioned, with much gravity, to be allowed every day, on entering and quitting the house, to kiss his mistress's cheek. The favour was granted; and the methodical and conscientious lover, never dreaming of overstepping the bounds prescribed, gave his beloved two kisses regularly per day. The courtship was carried on in French, of which the mother did not understand one word, and the daughter very few; but, the diplomacy of love requiring but little aid from language, the business was conducted with facility, and terminated as it ought. If the mother,

however, left the room for an instant, during the courtship, the lover, in the greatest alarm for the honour of his mistress, would start up from the sofa, on which they usually sat, and, throwing open the door of the apartment, that the persons in the next room might have a full view of him, would pace to and fro, or stand as far as possible from the girl, until the duenna returned.

When a marriage takes place, all the furniture, linen, plate, &c. is brought by the lady; and in these matters the Normans are extravagant. In humble life, the girls frequently labour for many years to get together the sum necessary for furnishing their *trousseau*, as their contribution to the matrimonial stock is denominated; and are generally betrothed, from a very early age, to some young man of the neighbourhood, who does the same thing. The young lace-makers of Caen, whom we see plying their fingers so merrily at their cottage doors, are all labouring for love. A great many of the young men of this department are stone-cutters, and go up to exercise their calling in Paris, where, labour being more productive, they more rapidly acquire the sum supposed to be necessary for commencing housekeeping.

I observed, a few pages back, that, before the first hoot of the owl, the villagers are generally in the land of dreams; but, if they retire early to bed, they certainly make up for it by rising with the lark in the morning; though I cannot discover that the old adage,

Early to bed, and early to rise,
Is the way to be healthy, wealthy, and wise,

is at all verified in their case; for, though they are healthy enough, they cannot be called either wise or wealthy. However, as I have said, they are up early in the morning; and I have not unfrequently been awakened before dawn on a Sunday, by the flail of one of these noisy descendants of Rollo, who are, in

general, particularly industrious on that day, as if to annoy the protestants, and their own pastor.

Shortly after our arrival at the village, we went to the little church to hear evening service. We approached the sacred building through a narrow, dark lane, and crossed the cemetery, where the light, streaming from the narrow windows, and falling on the high walls and trees by which the edifice is surrounded, had a solemn, romantic appearance. On entering, I observed that the congregation was thin, and, as in all the other churches, consisted chiefly of women; but these were well dressed for peasants, and their clean white caps, ranged in long lines, had a pleasing appearance. Along the walls, long slender candles were burning, but not in sufficient number entirely to dispel the darkness which still harboured in various nooks of the building, and communicated to the scene an air of sombre religion. I walked up the church, and took a seat near the pulpit. The curé, in his black robes, was standing silently at the extremity of the church, in front of the altar, where a few small tapers yielded a dim religious light, and imperfectly discovered the large picture which formed the altarpiece: suddenly several voices burst forth in a loud monotonous chant, which, by the continued recurrence of the same notes, produced a kind of sublime effect, like the endless repetition of the same figure upon an Egyptian obelisk. Then the singing ceased, and the sermon commenced. The whole discourse turned upon the necessity of penitence for sin; and the looks, tones, voice, and gestures of the preacher, were precisely such as one ought to find in a village church. He did not hunt after rhetorical figures, or aim at producing effect by violent gestures; his manner was as simple as that of a patriarch addressing the people of his tribe under a tree. This, however, is not by any means the general character of a French preacher, nor is it that best suited to the taste of the people, who prefer fierce declamation, a theatrical display of emotion, and terrible denunciation of God's vengeance.

In religion, as in every thing else, they love exaggeration; which, perhaps, is the case with all half-barbarous nations. The strong resinous smell of the incense in catholic churches is offensive, especially on first entering.

Tuesday, October 20th, I walked in to Caen with the curé, to be introduced at the public library. The weather was beautiful, and the wide downs which surround the city, over which numerous small villages are scattered, seemed to rejoice in the sunshine, like the living creatures which moved to and fro over them. Conversing as we went, on "fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute," &c. the way seemed short, and we were in the town almost before we were aware of it. As we passed the great quarries of Vancelles,* the curé observed to me, that, when William the Bastard had completed the conquest of England, he prohibited the people of Caen from building with stones, under the persuasion that they would soon become scarce, and transported the best of those found in this neighbourhood to London.

The public library occupies the principal apartment of the Hôtel de Ville, in the Place Royal. The room, which is directly above the chapel, now used as a wood-house, cannot, I think, be less than one hundred and fifty feet in length, by about fifty in width. About the middle, it enlarges, like a church, and takes the form of a cross, of which the arms, however, are short, and terminate in lofty windows.

* Dr Dibdin makes a very laughable mistake, in speaking of these quarries, informing us, that, according to Huet, the abbey of St Étienne, at Caen, was built with stone brought partly from Vancelles, and "partly from Germany!" French Trans. tome ii, p. 25. Huet, however, knew better. By "Allemagne," the word which deceived the worthy Doctor, the author of the *Origines de Caen*, merely meant the village of that name, situated upon the banks of the Orne, about two miles above the city. It would, indeed, have been very extraordinary if William, passing by the noble quarries of Caen, had sent all the way to Germany for stone to build his churches.

Above the book shelves are portraits of the principal benefactors to the library, or to the city, among whom Bochart, and Huet, bishop of Avranches, are, perhaps, the most remarkable. The few students who frequent this establishment, are furnished, as at the British Museum, with chairs, tables, pens, and ink. The library is said to contain twenty-five thousand volumes, and perhaps it may; but the greater number of these volumes are worth nothing, consisting chiefly of school divinity, casuistry, legends of saints, &c. These books are the spoils of the monasteries of the neighbourhood, which were ransacked during the Revolution; and they have still the appearance of belonging to a monastery. I observed, in a very conspicuous part of the room, Father Sanchez's treatise on the Sacrament of Matrimony, which appears to have been a favourite work with the monks; and, not far from it, was the folio edition of the French Encyclopædia; the former, the most abandoned production of the catholic church, the latter, the most objectionable of all those works which have been directed against catholicism. Of English books, there are extremely few, as well as of modern French publications. There is no printed catalogue, it being thought that the twelve or fourteen hundred francs, which the printing of a catalogue would cost, would be better laid out in the purchase of new books. The written catalogue, however, which fills five folio volumes, is cleverly and methodically made out, and serves all the useful purposes of a catalogue. The librarian is a civil, but heavy man, with scarcely sufficient intellect for his office, which does not require much; but yet, I cannot suppose that he could have mistaken a printed book for a manuscript, until Dr Dibdin set him right. Not being a bibliographer, like my worthy predecessor, I made no inquiries respecting any *editio princeps*, or Polyglott Bibles; but, being frequently desirous, during the seven or eight months I spent at Caen, to make use of this library, I found it miserably deficient in all

works of utility. In fact, public libraries are but too frequently filled with curious toys, and articles of mere luxury, to the exclusion of what is most exquisite and valuable in literature. I cannot, however, imagine a more despicable heap of rubbish than a bibliomaniac's library; such a one, for example, as Dr Dibdin would prize, and as one finds in too many great houses in England. One event connected with the history of this establishment, I ought to mention with praise. In the course of the last spring, the shelves were cleared of all duplicate copies of books, and of much other useless lumber; and the volumes thus cast out were sold. I examined the mass, as it lay strewed about the floor of the room, but could discover little to tempt any one but a bibliomaniac, except a few odd volumes of St Augustin, Bochart's *Geographia Sacra*, and the *Posthumous Works of Benedict Spinoza*.

CHAPTER IV.

Opening of the Cour Royale—Abbey Church of St Etienne—Tomb of William the Conqueror—Women excluded from the Sanctuary, or Choir, in Catholic Churches—Haunters of Courts of Justice—Female Valets of the Cour Royale—Advocate-General's Speech—Excursion to Mondeville—Curious Custom—A Christening—Choice of the Names of Children regulated by Law.

ON Tuesday, 3d November, the Cour Royale, that is, the Court of Justice, was opened for the season, and, of course, I was desirous of being present. Leaving Cornelles early in the morning, we arrived at the Palais de la Justice about ten o'clock, but observed no indications of the approach of an imposing ceremony. The gates, however, were open, and a few solitary individuals were pacing to and fro, with folded arms, beneath the vast portico. On inquiring

at what hour the Cour was to open, we found that we had an hour to spare ; and as nothing was to be gained by remaining where we were, gazing at the passing crowd, or at one another, I proposed visiting the church of St Etienne. It was agreed. We repaired to the church—entered. The interior of the building is magnificent. The body of the church, expanding, as it were, before the eye, to a distance which appears immense, by the delusive effects of the architecture, is profusely lighted by five large windows, and is free from all unseemly ornament. On the left hand, a range of small chapels, enelosed at the bottom by iron railings, and decorated with pictures, which look well enough at a distance, extends along the whole length of the building ; and, sweeping round the eastern extremity, behind the altar, reaches half way up the other side. In these, besides the pictures above mentioned, statues, relics, &c. meet the eye in profusion. Upon examination, the pictures and statues are found to be poor things. Of the value of the relics, I am no judge.

After having enjoyed the first *coup-d'œil* of the building, I began to look about for the worshippers. A poor old woman, wrapped in a wretched gray cloak, the hood of which was drawn over her head, and partly concealed her face, was sitting near the door, with her feeble head leaning against the cold damp wall. She never stirred, and I could discover no signs of life in her countenance. In fact, she had the appearance of an image, flung carelessly against the wall. Perhaps the poor old creature had been carried thither to die,—happy to close her eyes in the house of God. She certainly seemed too weak to have crawled thither herself. About the middle of the building, another woman, but younger and stronger, was kneeling before the railings which divide that part of the edifice which is called the choir, or sanctuary, from the remainder of the church. In opening the iron gate of the choir, we disturbed

her devotions. She arose from her knees and retired. I could not see another soul in the abbey ; but, from certain enclosed niches on the right, probably the sacristy, the sound of numerous voices proceeded. The conversation was carried on by men ; and, by the snatches of it which reached us, it appeared to be on some vulgar worldly topic. In catholic churches, the choir, or sanctuary, is regarded as too sacred to be entered by women. The reason, however, may be discovered, if we look narrowly into the matter, in another regulation of the church—that which condemns the priests to single blessedness ; for the too near approach of beauty might derange the ideas of men living in forced celibacy. Whatever be the cause, it is a disgraceful regulation,—savouring more of those barbarous times, in which women were looked upon as inferior animals, than of that high state of civilization which France boasts of having reached. In England, and, indeed, wherever protestantism prevails, marriage renders it possible for a clergyman to be surrounded by the fair, even during the performance of the most holy offices of his religion.

When we had entered the sanctuary, I advanced up towards the altar, to the spot where the ashes of William, the Norman conqueror of England, repose,—or once did repose,—and put my foot upon the tomb of this mighty king. There was his name upon the ground,—“ *Invictissimus Gulielmus.*” Poor fellow ! Dull antiquaries had trampled a thousand times upon his remains ; the mob had torn them from their resting place ; and a cobbler’s children had, perhaps, played at bat and ball with his thigh bones. It was not, however, to bestow an Egyptian immortality upon his thigh bones that William fought and conquered, but that his name might fill the world, and the memory of mankind ; and I that moment felt, that his object had been accomplished. The very atmosphere seemed fraught with the glory of William,

which hung, like a mighty shadow, upon the church, upon the adjoining streets, and, in one word, on all the city of Caen. I seemed to breathe the air of heroism as I moved, and my heart dilated with indescribable pleasure. Such is the influence of great mental energy, even when, as in the present instance, it is allied with vice and tyranny.

From the abbey we returned to the Palace of Justice, where some signs of the approaching ceremony were now visible. Small groups of English ladies were walking to and fro on the Place St Sauveur,—the people under the portico were every moment becoming more numerous,—and among them I now and then saw the black gown and cap, and the white appendages, of an advocate, passing and repassing. The lawyers, and even the judges, wear their own hair,—a wig not being here deemed a mark of wisdom. Among the crowd I observed one individual who seemed to have served his apprenticeship at the Old Bailey and the courts of law in London. He wore a white hat, which was perked in a knowing manner on one side of the head. His coat, a long brown frock, was left unbuttoned, and he stuck his hands in his pockets, and strutted about like a man quite at home. His countenance exhibited that mixture of audacious impudence and hardened indifference respecting right and wrong, which appears to be the livery of all hunters of courts of justice, and created in me a sensation of ineffable loathing and disgust. I could read perjury, false testimony, thief-taking, and every cowardly atrocity, in his features, and felt as uneasy as I should if a rattlesnake or a crocodile were creeping about me.

At length the judges arrived, and entered the apartment where they were to put on their robes of ceremony. We had been told by a female attendant of the palace, that the great dignitaries of the court would hear mass, in a neighbouring chapel, before they commenced the business of the day; but could

obtain no precise information from any person, as all those of whom we inquired exhibited that remarkable want of civility visible in all the understrappers of justice, and engendered, perhaps, by the numerous questions which are necessarily put to them. While we were standing in some doubt what movement to make next, we observed an old gentleman, with a party of ladies, coming up, and, having whispered for a moment or two with some of the Cerberuses of the place, make for that part of the palace where, we had been told, the ceremony was to take place. We now took this party for our guide, and followed them, without speaking a word. They passed under a lofty archway into a spacious court, and, having crossed it, entered a small door, from which a steep winding flight of stairs led up to the top of the building. Treading close in the steps of our conductors we reached a small landing-place, where a man appeared, bearing, like a jailor, a huge bunch of keys in his hand. We now began to suspect that, instead of the palace of justice, we had entered a private dwelling; and I expressed our suspicion in French to one of the strange young ladies who were going before us: she turned her fine blue eyes upon me, and replied smilingly in English, that she believed we were going right. Without taking the slightest notice of our little dialogue, the man with the keys ascended the stairs, and we followed him, door after door opening before us and closing after us. At length we arrived at a long gallery, or corridor, overlooking the great court we had crossed below, and saw on our left numerous little doors, with the names of different individuals painted upon them—"Prevost"—"Duvall"—&c. I conjectured that these were the names of different advocates, and that the little niches belonged to them. I afterwards found that they contained their caps and gowns.

Passing along this corridor, and entering a small door at the farther end, we suddenly found ourselves

in the hall of justice, in a small gallery, whence we could look down and see all that might be going on below. Three or four persons were already in the court, and the number increased every minute. Among the crowd, there appeared several advocates, who passed into the privileged portion of the apartment, enclosed from the space allotted to the vulgar by a range of high seats. Round the farther end of the court ran three ranges of seats,—those next the wall being evidently the places of honour; and in the centre was the president's chair. With a singular disregard of appearances, the public had been admitted, before the room, which had been closed for nearly a year, was cleaned or dusted, and even before the stoves, which were just lighted, had warmed the damp air.

The various tables, which were ranged round the wall, were covered with green baize, which looked tolerably well, though somewhat dusty. While we were gazing about us, two female domestics—for in Normandy women do every thing—came in with small brushes in their hands, to stir about the dust, demolish the cobwebs, and put the place in order. They first removed the green baize from the tables, upon which a thick coat of dust, the deposition of a whole year, now appeared; but when this was brushed off, we discovered that they were of marble. When this portion of the business had been performed, one of the female valets retired,—first, however, after the manner of the place, making a speech to her learned sister, which, though by no means inaudible, was unintelligible, in the gallery.

While these important matters were in progress, we observed the advocates below elbowing the crowd, and making towards the door, with as fierce a determination to be out first, as they could have manifested had the cry of "Fire! Fire!" resounded in their ears. Inquiring into the cause of this sudden retreat, we learned with dismay, that the bell which we just then

heard going ding, dong, in a neighbouring church, was calling the lawyers to mass, and that we had yet to wait another good hour before the business of the day would commence. As mass could be heard, or rather seen, every day, we remained where we were, for fear we should lose our places; and the gallery gradually became fuller and fuller.

At the extremity of the court, directly above the president's chair, was a portrait of Louis XVIII, and on each side, upon the walls, numerous fleurs de lis, surmounted by crowns. Above these, and not very far from the roof, were two large stone tablets, shaped like those which in pictures are generally represented in the hands of Moses, upon which were the words "Code Penal." On the left were other similar tablets, bearing, we supposed, the words "Code Civile," but they were invisible from where we sat. On the edge of the table which stood before the chair of the president, the words "Respect à la Loi" were written in letters of gold. The gilded ornaments, which adorned the seat of the chief of justice, were stuck on while we were there.

When mass was at length over, the judges, the advocates, and a mob of followers, entered the court, and walked up, according to their rank, to their places within the enclosure. When seated round the room, the judges in their scarlet gowns and the advocates in black, they made a very respectable appearance; but the scene which followed wofully disappointed us. We had been told, that the advocate-general, the person who was that day to address the court in a set speech, was an orator of more than ordinary powers,—an orator who had frequently succeeded, by his knowledge of the secret springs of the passions, in melting even lawyers to tears. He soon stood up, with a roll of paper in his hand, and read a speech of an hour's length, to an audience, every individual of which, I am convinced, was heartily weary of his prosing harangue, for the last

fifty minutes at least. His voice was lugubrious and tremulous, as if from a sudden access of grief, or from extreme old age, though the man was but of middle age, and had not, I suppose, any very particular reason for hovering upon the verge of weeping. If any one ever shed tears at hearing him read—for he could not be said to speak—it was certainly from pity or rage. His action and gesture were inferior to those of a common methodist preacher; and his person, which, according to Cicero and Quintilian, should be eloquent in an eloquent man, was as inexpressive as a stick. Of the matter of his discourse it would be unjust to say much, for he took care we should not hear half of it; but, as far as I could judge, it consisted of a string of commonplaces on the dignity of the law, and the superiority of modern advocates. When this tiresome oration was over, two or three new judges were sworn in and installed, and the business of the day was at an end.

My next excursion was with a party of ladies to the village of Mondeville, situated upon the left bank of the Orne, a little to the north of Caen, where, I was informed, there were some small but singular caverns to be seen. Though it was the beginning of December, the weather was remarkably fine, the sun shining beautifully all the morning from a sky slightly sprinkled with thin clouds. The road to the village was dry and clean, but, as soon as we had entered it, became almost impassable, from mud and pools of water, to say nothing of worse impediments. This is always the case in Norman villages. The peasants seem to delight in dirt and unsavoury smells, and, in general, select low unwholesome spots on which to erect their hovels, as has already been remarked by a judicious native writer. The grounds, to see which formed the object of our walk, were once laid out with taste, and are certainly very beautiful upon a small scale. They are situated upon the side of a steep hill, and command a very fine view of the

Orne all the way up to Caen, winding through rich meadows thickly studded with trees, now of course leafless. Here and there in the gardens, was a small cavern, or hollow in the rock, shaded by clustering trees, and approached by narrow deep ravines, over which small rustic bridges are thrown. One of these caves is large and lofty, and divided by a portion of the rock,—which springs up like a huge pillar,—into several apartments, the most gloomy and remote of which ends in a dark fissure, which seems to lead into the bowels of the earth. In one of the divisions of the cavern, was a fine large dark green plant, flourishing in obscurity. Another division had been converted into a receptacle for potatoes.

In various parts of the gardens, which, as Montaigne said of the Tyrol, were like a plaited garment, that would appear large if stretched out, there were numerous statues of Pagan divinities, standing up among the trees,—as Cupid, the three Graces, Venus, &c. Two of these were exceedingly fine casts,—one of the Venus de Medici, the other of Bacchus carrying a faun. At the bottom of the gardens, there runs a stream of beautifully clear water, beneath overarching trees.

The eastern portion of Mondeville is a long line of miserable dwellings, sweeping round in a curve, at the foot of a gray barren hill. The village below is a picture of utter wretchedness—the hill above, of utter desolation. Yet this miserable cluster of hovels is not altogether without consequence, being mentioned more than once in the history of the duchy. It was anciently called *Hamundivilla*, which has gradually been softened down to its present name. It was bestowed, in 989, by Duke Richard I, upon the church of Fescamp, whose abbé was at once its civil and spiritual lord. A very curious custom anciently obtained here, as well as at Caen. Every year, the lands, which, like those in many other parts, belonging to corporate bodies, were not permitted to be enclosed,

were measured out by a perch, and each person's share allotted to him. This was called the *Livrée*; and the monks of Fescamp were bound to furnish a fat cow, a pipe of cider, and a proportionate quantity of bread, to refresh the vassals, priests, and *clerks* of the said parish, engaged in the admeasurement of the lands. The most remarkable part of the business was, that, even so late as the sixteenth century, the length of the perch was not fixed, but varied every year, according to the size of the man's foot which the farmers chose to make the standard of the season.*

Sunday, Dec. 20.—A few days ago, there was a christening at the village church; and I, of course, went to witness the ceremony. It was to have taken place at three o'clock; but, at the appointed hour, the curé had not returned from Caen; and, while we were waiting for him, we strolled about over the crisp frosty fields behind the village. At length the dark figure of the parish priest was seen approaching from the city; and, preceded or followed by all the ragged boys in the place, we repaired to the scene of action. It was now, however, the turn of the cobbler, who was the father of the child, to maintain his dignity; and, the curé having been behind time, he also resolved to come slowly to the ground. In the meantime, our patience was pretty nearly put to flight by the cold. We entered the church, kicked our heels against the pavement, looked at the altar-piece and the font, abused the cobbler, then went out again. In the churchyard we found the curé, looking half-frozen, and vowing, that, unless the shoemaker made haste, he would retreat, and leave his offspring nameless. To prevent so embarrassing a result, we sallied forth, and, proceeding down the village, soon encountered the child, snugly wrapped up, in the arms of the sage-femme, and accompanied by his grandfather

* Delarue, *Essai Historiques sur Caen*, &c. tome I. p. 359. &c.

and grandmother. Returning with this imposing pageant to the church, we beheld the ceremony performed. It is here no joke to be christened; for the candidate for admission into the catholic church not only has cold water poured upon his bare head, and oil put upon his bosom, but, to complete his trials, has a quantity of salt put into his mouth, like an Arab receiving the rite of hospitality. The young cobbler, Matthieu-Emmanuel-Alphonse, made a desperately wry mouth at this part of the ceremony; but remained quiet during the rest of the service. He was one day old.

No money is paid on these occasions; but as Matthieu-Emmanuel, &c. was a first child, a delicate fine white napkin was added to the box of *bon-bons* usually presented to the priest. The Latin portion of the service, part of which, to their great edification, is repeated by the godfathers and godmothers, is generally hurried over in a very slovenly manner; but, in conclusion, the priest addresses a discourse in French to the sponsors, &c. with somewhat more leisure and solemnity. The water is put into the font once a-year, after being consecrated, and is kept under lock and key.

According to the ecclesiastical code of France, the "*matière éloignée*" of this sacrament is natural water, such as rain, fountain, river, or sea water. Artificial water, *eau de vie*, wine, or saliva, if substituted in the place of natural water, would render the baptism null. On solemn occasions, water which has been blessed on the Saturday before Easter is used.*

The formula of baptism is generally pronounced in Latin; but we are comforted with the assurance, that, even were it delivered in French, or any other language, it would be equally effectual; nay, even should the priest commit a few grammatical errors

* Concil. Trident. sess. 7, Can. 2; Innocent III. cap. non. ut extra. de baptismo et ejus effectu. *Code Eccles. Fr.* tome II. p. 284.

on the occasion, which the Church foresaw was not at all improbable.

As new-born infants are extremely liable to die, the catholic church, which teaches, that if they depart unbaptized, they are for ever excluded from the presence of God, is of course anxious that the ceremony, upon which so much depends, should be performed as soon as possible after birth, and earnestly exhorts parents not on any account to defer it beyond the first day. In fact, the synodal statutes of several dioceses positively ordain, that infants shall be baptized on the very day of their birth, or, at farthest, on the next day.

In addition to all this solicitude,—which may be interpreted more ways than one,—the laws of France, both civil and ecclesiastical, absurdly meddle with the names which parents bestow upon their children; the former confining the choice of parents to the names of the saints mentioned in the calendar, and the celebrated personages of ancient history; the latter, to the names of such saints as the church honours with public worship. For some mysterious reason, which is not even hinted at, the curés of parishes are directed to take care that no pagan appellation be bestowed upon an infant. The names of Socrates and Aristides are, therefore, proscribed in France. This law dates as far back as the year XI (1803;) and, consequently, is a specimen of Napoleon's wisdom. The most laughable part of the whole is, that, by this masterpiece of legislation, those persons who, at the period of the promulgation of the law, happened to bear heterodox names, were invited to change them for new ones. Monks and nuns cannot stand as godfathers and godmothers.*

* *Code Ecclesiastique Français*, tome II, p. 284-286.

CHAPTER V.

Excursion to Vieux, an ancient Roman city—Singular Ferry-boat—The Church—The Curé's Niece—Sarcophagi—The Cabaret—Cider Brandy—Guide to the Antiquities—Dinner at the Cabaret—Markets of Caen—Woodsellers and Woodcutters—Butter and Cheese—Peasant Girls—Public Scales and Weights—Desecrated Chapel—Commencement of Winter—Snow—Intensity of the Cold—The Wolves come out of the Forests—Winter Studies—Christmas Eve—Midnight Mass.

ON one of those fine frosty days of December, which preceded the setting in of the snow, I made an excursion to Vieux,*—which I believe, in spite of the bishop of Avranches, to have been the ancient capital of the Viducassi,—in company with a small party of ladies. We left Cormelles early in the morning, and, passing through If, Allemagne, and St André, crossed the Orne in a ferry-boat of very remarkable form and construction. It resembled the upper part of a Gothic arch, and, consequently, was nearly as broad as it was long. It was perfectly flat, like a raft, or catamaran, and had no seats, so that we were obliged to stand upon its wet floor, while passing the river. The hinder part, or stern, if it could be called so, was open, and as nearly as possible on a level with the water's edge; but a species of bulwark, about a foot and a half high, ran round the two sides, and met and joined at the point. A cable of moderate size was extended across the sluggish stream; and by this the little Norman Charon, who

* The reader will find, in the Appendix, No. I, the history of the various discoveries which have been made at this village, copied from *La Description Topographique et Statistique de la France*, (No. 49, p. 41, 42,) a work of merit and authority.

was as silent as his boat, pulled us over. On the other side, we made the land over a raft resembling the flying bridge at Plymouth, which lies moored, I imagine, the greater part of the year, exactly where we found it; for it is meant for the conveyance of horses and carriages, which do not appear to pass very frequently by this road. Though awkward enough to look at, it is convenient; but, like every thing else in the country, is out of repair, and holds so much water in its pits and hollows, that one of the ladies wet her feet in traversing it.

From this ferry we walked on to Fignerolles, a village remarkable for nothing but its vast dunghills and numerous geese, and from thence, through a picturesque and well-wooded country, to Vieux. Here it very soon became evident, that, whatever might have been the case formerly, all traces of antiquity had now disappeared. We perambulated the village and its environs in every direction, and, excepting that the place was somewhat larger, could discover nothing to distinguish it from any of the other villages in the neighbourhood of Caen. We at length resolved, as a last resource, to visit the church; and, knocking for some time at the door of the presbytère, or parsonage, by dint of perseverance succeeded in awakening a rough middle-aged woman, in a peasant's habit, who, after some parley, consented, in a surly morose tone, to shew us the sacred building. This rude piece of womankind, we found, was the curé's niece. I had at that moment under my arm, the niece of another curé—a young Irish beauty, transplanted from Dublin to those rude scenes; and the contrast between the two was complete.

We followed our conductress, and were led into the church through a door opening beside the altar. In catholic countries, women are not, as I have already observed, permitted to enter this part of the church; and, either for this reason, or because the view of the altar would be more striking in approach-

ing from the other end of the building, my young catholic friend immediately turned round, and went out, in order to enter from the great door. Our fair conductress, however, was not a person to be joked with; and, the moment our whole party was outside, she very coolly locked the door, and put the key in her pocket. When we perceived this, we explained our movements; but the lady's only reply was, that she could not waste her time on our account, and that we must be satisfied with what we had seen. I had hitherto seen no instance of such gross incivility in Normandy, and certainly should not have expected it from a woman.

However, since we found ourselves thus shut out of the church, we were forced to be content with the churchyard, and strolled about, moralizing like Hervey among the tombs. Here, they were of all shapes and sizes, some formed like Egyptian sarcophagi, and covered with sculpture bedaubed with paint, and rude enough to be mistaken for hieroglyphics; others like little pyramids, springing up from small square bases, and surmounted by pigny globes; others, again, like common stone coffins. A cemetery is a place where one can always spend half an hour profitably, if not pleasantly; but, even here, in the midst of mortality and gloom, one gets hungry,—at least this was the case with us in the churchyard of Vieux.

After a very sharp and careful scrutiny of the appearance of all the houses in the village, and making numerous inquiries, we were directed to what the good people were pleased to call an *anberge*. It was such a place as one sometimes reads of in a romance, when the author, having rejoiced our imagination with pictures of splendour, which we should be glad to find realized, tasks his invention to the utmost to represent the other extreme, for the sake of contrast. This, at least, was the appearance it wore at first; but most things improve a little upon

acquaintance. It was a large room, or rather a square place surrounded by four walls, in one corner of which there was a bed, while on the opposite side, the rude table and forms, which the family used when assembled to devour their meals, were huddled together in the most admirable confusion. A few wooden shelves fastened to one of the walls, supported the *batterie de cuisine*, and other utensils of the family. Two or three miserable chairs, which looked as if they would have been glad to retire from active service, stood here and there upon the floor; and upon these we seated ourselves.

Upon our inquiring, with much misgiving, whether there was any wine in the house, we learned that the whole stock of the auberge consisted in the fourth part of a bottle of cider brandy, which was immediately produced. When persons, in a case of this kind, are put upon Hobson's choice, they are very soon decided. We accepted of this remnant of a bottle of this most execrable of all spirituous liquors, seeing that nothing else was to be procured; and, desiring one of the maidservants to warm a little water, in order to convert this brandy into punch, we began timidly to direct our inquiries towards the solids. Here, however, we were more successful. There was an abundance of bread and butter to be got, and this was quickly laid out on a clean cloth, upon the only table in the house, together with a plate of apples and another of walnuts.

While these operations were going on, the lord of the mansion came in, and began to exhibit his knowledge of the *locale* of the village. He informed us that he was the *Guide to the Antiquities*; but when we inquired what those antiquities were, we found that there were none. For our satisfaction, however, he undertook to conduct us to the spot where, according to his account, some very curious relics of past times had formerly been dug up. While this dialogue was going on between us and the guide to the antiquities,

several little urchins, evidently not much accustomed to the sight of strangers, crowded round the window, and appeared, by the liberality with which they shewed their white teeth, to be very much amused at our costume and manners. The aubergist, anxious for the honour of his house, now drew over the lower part of the window a short curtain, which might have been white when the Romans were at Vieux, to screen us from the gaze of those "curious impertinents;" but they, with heroic perseverance, ascended the seat of the window, and refused to retreat, until the enraged guide menaced a sortie, when they galloped off in confusion.

And now the dinner was spread, and each of the attendants drew from her pocket a huge clasp-knife, with which we commenced our attack upon the bread and butter. These knives, like Achilles's sceptre, pass down from mother to daughter, or from father to son, as the case may be, as an heirloom.

From our auberge, we repaired to the spot where we had heard the tessellated pavement had been discovered; and our guide, determined to amuse us, commenced the digging of a hole, in which, in case of necessity, a cat might have been buried without shewing her tail. A small piece of brick, which, for aught I know, might have been buried there by the ingenious guide himself, was all his enterprizing mattock and spade could conjure from this pit; and, laughing internally at the ludicrous figure we must have made, overlooking the rogue of a brick-finder, we put an end to the excavations, and retreated from the capital of the Viducassi, leaving the piece of brick for the next curious traveller. Returning home by a nearer route than that we had taken in the morning, we reached Cormelles about two hours after dark, having walked about twenty-two miles.

From this unlucky hunt after antiquities, I pass to something more substantial,—the markets of Caen. These are held twice a-week, on Monday and Friday,

when the genuine Norman peasant, rough, rude, but cunning as the devil, may be seen in his true colours. The fruit-market and the fish-market, which flank the church of St Pierre, one on each side, and form a kind of Billingsgate in miniature, are held every day; but *the market* κατ' ἐξοχὴν occupies a large open space, called the Place St Sauveur, near the Palace of Justice. Here one may observe the productions of Calvados of every kind, and study, perhaps to as much advantage as any where, the science of buying and selling. The first visit I paid this market was for the purpose of buying a load of wood, a business requiring considerable skill, as, like great wit and madness, the good and the bad seem to be divided by "thin partitions," and there is, of course, no relying upon the honesty of the sellers. After strolling about for some time, we observed a wagon loaded with elm, the best fire-wood, and demanded the price. There were three persons near the wagon, and of these, one replied, "Fifty-five francs," another, "Fifty-eight." Here was a trait of Norman character. Both were determined to ask the foreigners a little too much, but one had more conscience than the other. The wood was scarcely worth forty francs. However, there was no necessity for dealing with these persons, as numerous carts and wagons, loaded with trunks of knarled oak, beech, and elm, were scattered about the market-place, with peasants in blue frocks, from the neighbourhood of Pont l'Eveque, Lisiens, and various parts of the Bocage, fierce-looking as banditti, lounging about them, watching for customers. As we passed to and fro, they crowded about us, teasing us to buy. Among them were the sworn measurers, with their instruments in their hands, and the woodcutters, with axe and wedge, ready to commence operations.

In other parts of the Place, the peasants were ranged in long lines, some with butter in the form of a sugar-loaf, wrapped up in clean white linen, and

looking very nice; others with small white cheeses, about the size of a bun; others with fancy bread; others with fruit or vegetables. The country girls who attend this market have all the flush of fine rosy health upon their cheeks; but it must be acknowledged that very few of them are handsome. They have in general fine high foreheads, but their cheekbones also are high, and there is a squareness in the form of the countenance, like that which distinguishes the Mongol race, which puts all ideas of beauty to flight.

On one side of the market-place stand a woman and a man, the representatives of Justice, near a large table, upon which are placed the public scales and weights. Hither the reluctant peasant, who would prefer scales and weights of his own, and his customers, resort; and the goddess Diké presides over the transfer of the butter, &c. from the seller to the buyer. If you are a stranger, however, and imagine that the weighers are placed there to perform their duty gratis, a gentle tap upon the shoulder, and the words "un sou, Monsieur," will remind you, that in civilized society, man is to expect nothing for nothing. The same sum is also demanded from the seller; but whether the charge be proportioned to the value, or the bulk or weight of the articles sold, I have not learned.

At the east end of the Place St Sauveur, is an ancient chapel — the doorway of which is engraved in Ducarel — converted into a market-house. I have a great aversion to all metamorphoses of this kind, and experienced a sort of disgust for the people as I entered it. The fine old pillars, the stone filigree work, and rich tracery, the embowed roof, which had once been hallowed by the chant of anthems, and the solemn ceremonies of religion, were now dirty, mutilated, and decayed. The rude, money-loving Normans were brawling and disputing at the foot of the columns; and, taking into the account the propensities of all

market-people, one might, without too great a stretch of uncharitableness, affirm, that the house of prayer had here been made a den of thieves. If the scene, however, was melancholy, it was picturesque, and would have looked well in a piece of Tenier's. I have never seen a small picture of the kind more interesting: here were flour, pease, vetches, beans,—in one word, grain and pulse of every kind,—ranged along in sacks, at the foot of the Gothic pillars, with their mouths open to tempt the multitude. Rough peasants, with their red caps up, sky-blue frocks, and unshorn chins, were jabbering, gesticulating, disputing, and swearing on all sides; while fierce-looking old women, like Shakespeare's witches, or young ones, more pretty, but not less fierce, stood behind the sacks, declaiming in most unfeminine tones the praises of their pease and beans.

Towards the latter end of December, the snow, which had several times slightly sprinkled the ground, and melted away, began to come down in good earnest; and, in the course of a few days, the whole country was buried beneath a covering many feet thick. In the meanwhile, the wind shifted round to the north, and travelling, perhaps, over nothing but ice and snow, from the Polar circle until it reached us, brought with it a degree of cold which I did not suppose was ever experienced south of Spitzbergen. The ponds, the rivers, the very air was frozen: nay, what was much worse, my ink was converted into a mass of solid ice; so that, my first occupation every morning, was to thaw my ink before a blazing fire, which generally took up half an hour at the least. I now began to understand the reason why Greenland has produced no poets or philosophers. It is impossible to meditate or think continuously in the cold: ideas, like words, may be said to have wings, which, notwithstanding their spiritual nature, appear to be frozen by a sharp north wind. The same warmth which reduced the ink to fluidity, seemed, likewise,

to put my ideas in motion; but the activity thus produced, was not of long continuance, and required to be renewed ever and anon, by heaping the fire afresh, and the strenuous use of the bellows: in fact, the only pleasant things I can remember, were, blowing the fire, and drinking hot coffee; every thing else in life was insipid. With respect to walking, though it was certainly possible to exert the locomotive powers, it was impossible to produce an agreeable warmth in the frame in that way. The most that could be done, was to keep oneself from being frozen to death. The sun itself seemed like a mere phantom, or mock sun, travelling like a deputy through the sky, not commissioned to yield any warmth. The snow, on the other hand, dazzling and glittering on all sides, acutely pained the eyes, and rendered all quick movements impossible, except on the highway.

In the meanwhile, the wolves, starved out of their retreats in the hilly districts, issued forth from the woods; and, spreading themselves over the plains in the neighbourhood of the towns and villages, caused a panic terror in the whole country. In some instances, it is said, they attacked the diligences on the highway; and were prevented from devouring the horses, which, in general, are not quite so fat as aldermen, and, perhaps, the passengers themselves, only by having all the turkeys, geese, fowls, &c. in the vehicle, thrown down to them. Their howlings, like those of Virgil's Circean chorus, "*será sub nocte rudentum*," terrified many a poor old woman into piety, and brought the Virgin into more request than ever. It is very certain that people were afraid to move out after dark; but, though I retired more than once from Caen at the hour in which it was fashionable for the wolves to be abroad, not a soul of them ever paid his respects to me, most likely out of regard to the Muses, whose priest they, no doubt, understood me to be.

Travellers, like bears and dormice, should go to sleep in the winter; for there is very little to see,

and not much to be learned. For my own part, I might as well have slept for a month or six weeks, as I certainly lost as much time. But sleeping, as well as waking, was unpleasant: my dreams were horrible, every whit as bad as those which Mr de Quincy procured himself, by supping upon opium; for I saw nothing in the regions of death's half brother but ice and snow, and heard nothing but the infernal whistling of the north wind. Our doors and windows, at this time, were literally besieged with sparrows and robin-redbreasts; and when you opened them to peep out for a moment at the storm, together with a gust of snow, a poor little bird was not unfrequently driven into the apartment. I used to leave the windows of my library open in the dusk of the evening, to allow these brethren of ours, as Mr Coleridge calls them, to come in to perch for the night among my books, and to shut up the place after they were asleep; but few ventured, and these were sure to make a great noise to get out in the morning. At the same time, the only amusement the children could find, was throwing out crumbs of bread, and watching the robins diving like cormorants for them in the soft snow.

As the snow now prevented my carrying on my researches in the country, I had recourse to reading; and the studies I carried on were singularly heterogeneous. One while I read Plato; then Guillaume de Jumiègue's *History of the Dukes of Normandy*; then Tennemann's *History of Philosophy*; then Orderius Vitalis; then the *Nouvelle Heloise*. Now I piled up the wood upon my fire; blew it with the bellows; warmed my hands, or stamped upon the ground to restore the circulation in my feet: then I would look out despairingly through the window at the unceasing snow, the odious glare of which saluted my eyes when I first opened them in the morning, and last closed them at night. Every body in the country seemed to have chilblains both on the hands and

feet ; and the cheeks looked as if they were just upon the point of becoming affected in the same way.

This was precisely the character of the weather when Christmas arrived. I expected the jollities and wassailing of this season would have put the cold, or at least all thoughts of it, to flight ; but Christmas is not a merry season here, unless you consider it a merry thing to go to mass, and hear canticles a mile long. On Christmas eve, the snow being too deep to allow of my going to Caen, to hear midnight mass, which is always a splendid ceremony in great catholic churches, I was compelled to content myself with the Lilliputian representation of the thing in our own parish church.* After spending the evening at the presbytère, I went to church with the curé's family, about eleven o'clock. The first thing that struck me on entering was the *chaufferette*, filled with burning

* The more imposing solemnities of the city churches, however, were witnessed by my friend, Dr Bennett, the protestant minister of Caen, who thus describes them :—" The first church I entered was that of St Jean, where the brilliant light of a thousand lamps and tapers, streaming between the massy pillars, and glittering on the gilded ornaments of the altar, and on the images and pictures, almost dazzled the sight. The service not having commenced here, however, I proceeded to the *Gloriette*, the ancient church of the Jesuits. Here I was forcibly struck, on my entrance, by the solemnity of the scene ; the effect of which was considerably heightened by the sweet voices of a number of women, who joined the regular chanters in singing forth the praises of the Redeemer. From this beautiful church I repaired to the Abbey of St Etienne, where the bones of the Norman conqueror repose, and whose extent and antique grandeur were more than I can describe. The sombre interior of the building ; the solemn chanting ; the fine melodious organ ; the dresses of the clergy ; and the numerous assemblage of persons drawn together by devotion, altogether formed a spectacle at once rich and imposing. Being desirous of seeing all the churches, as they appeared on this festival, I visited those of Notre Dame and St Pierre ; and then returned to that of St Jean, where I now found the service proceeding in all its splendour. The devotion of the people, on this occasion, appeared most striking ; and the sweet scent of the incense, and the

charcoal, upon which the curé was compelled to stand during mass, to keep his blood from congealing with the intense cold. Every other person in the church, also, except myself, had the same thing under the feet; and not without reason, for the night was one of the severest of the whole winter, every thing being buried in snow, and the wind blowing bitterly.

When we arrived at the church, the service had already begun. The appearance of the place was singular and impressive, but not very different from what it had been during the jubilee, though the women were more tastefully attired, and the whole congregation larger, and apparently more happy. The knowledge that it was midnight—that it was the anniversary of Christ's nativity—and, that in ten thousand churches, the faithful were at that moment assembled to celebrate the festival, certainly contributed to cast an additional air of solemnity over ceremonies striking enough at all times.

The law, it seems, ordains, that, on this occasion, high mass shall be celebrated at midnight, and low mass at break of day; but it is the practice to run over low mass immediately after the greater solemnity, to avoid the necessity of getting up so early in the morning. As people are generally out of temper when they are hungry, Roman Catholic priests must be in no enviable mood on the eve and morning of Christmas day, as they are expected to fast from six o'clock on the previous evening, until two in the afternoon of the next day.

singing of the congregation, no doubt increased the effect of the service. However one might differ from the catholics in opinion, I do not hesitate to say, that the sight of so great a multitude of his fellow-creatures, commemorating, at that silent hour of the night, the coming of the Saviour of the world, must afford great satisfaction to a sincere Christian." These are the remarks of a man no less remarkable for his piety and goodness of heart, than for his tolerance of those who differ from him in religious opinions.

The little church was exceedingly well lighted up. Several of the young women of the village, in order to exhibit their vocal powers, had been employed for a fortnight previously in learning a canticle to be sung upon this occasion ; and, no doubt, went to mass with delightful anticipations of the effects of their voices upon the ears and hearts of the congregation. Unfortunately, the singing of this canticle came in last ; and the Norman boors, influenced as little by respect for womankind as for religion, got up before the girls had completed one verse, and left them, like dull parliamentary orators, to address themselves to empty benches. Even the sacristan, whose limbs, tottering with age and trembling with cold, somewhat excused his impiety towards the sex, began to extinguish the tapers ; and to prevent our being left alone with the singers in total darkness, the curé was obliged to desire the sirens to reserve the remainder of their canticle until next day !

CHAPTER VI.

Caen during a Snow Storm—Norman Lamplighters—Fires of the Epiphany—King of the Bean—Marriage Season—A Village Wedding—Illegitimate Children—Conversation and Dress of the Ladies—Corruption of Manners—Character of the Women—Surveillance of Mothers—Auricular Confession—Character of the Inferior Priests—Condition of the Church—Pay and Number of the Clergy.

THE appearance of Caen, in the dusk of the evening of a snowy day, is not a little singular, as the numerous small penthouses, and other projections from the walls, afford a snug lodgement to large quantities of snow, which contrast strikingly with the gray walls and sombre streets. Numerous poor persons are

to be seen wrapped in an old blanket, or having a coal sack thrown over the shoulders, creeping like phantoms through the streets, buffeted by the snow storm, and weighed down with wretchedness. By the side of these, perhaps, the lamplighter hobbles along, upon his illuminating occupation.

It is impossible to understand the full force of the revolutionary cry, "*à la lanterne!*" without knowing exactly the way in which the lamps are suspended in French towns. It is thus:—A strong rope is fastened to the wall, on one side of the street, and stretched across to the other, where, passing over a small pulley, it falls into a long wooden box, which reaches to within about four feet of the ground: at the bottom of this box there is a small door, fastened by lock and key; and when the lamplighter, (not unfrequently a woman,) comes with his cumbrous apparatus in his hand, the operation of lighting is commenced with the unlocking of this door. The end of the rope, which is fastened to a peg, is then taken out, and the lamp, which swings over the middle of the street, is slowly lowered down; and the lamplighter again fastens the rope to the peg, marches out into the road, unhangs the lamp, and carries it over to the wall. Here a new series of operations takes place: first, the lamp is wiped a little, and oil poured into it; it is next put down upon the ground, while the operator takes out flint and steel, and strikes a light; then, the light being struck, the beacon is fired, carried to the middle of the street, and, when the artist has returned to the box, is swung up on high, just as goods are hoisted over the side of a transport ship. To close the whole business, the rope is fastened, and the box carefully locked as before. I have stood many a weary minute watching this enlightening process in the streets of Caen, where no one in want of a simile can say, "as quick as a lamplighter;" for I know of no two things in nature more alike than a Norman lamplighter and

a snail. Yet, such is the force of habit and prejudice, an honest French emigrant once proposed to the Lord Mayor, as a vast improvement, to introduce this fashion into London, where, to carry such a scheme into effect, it would be necessary for half of the inhabitants to turn lamplighters, so long and tedious is the process.

Happening, in the beginning of January, to be at Caen in the afternoon, I had to return at nightfall. When I had ascended the hill of Vancelles, and was fairly in the country, I observed that a thin white haze, apparently impregnated with snow, hung over the earth, looking like a reflection from the snow beneath. As I proceeded over the down, the canopy of mist seemed to close around me, and the scene assumed the most dreary aspect. At length, I thought I could perceive something like a vast star, twinkling through the white vapour on the edge of the horizon; and, while I was looking intently at it, conjecturing what it could be, another similar light burst upon the eye from another quarter. Immediately several others appeared; and I now perceived distinctly, that, on every snowy height, within the reach of the eye, a great fire was kindled, which, as it blazed up like a flaming pillar in the hazy distance, threw an air of sublimity over the prospect. I could not for my life conjecture what all these fires were kindled for. One moment, I imagined they might be meant to scare away the wolves from the villages and farm-yards; again, I thought they must be connected with the remains of some Pagan ceremony, and were, perhaps, those Baal-fires formerly lighted up on every eminence, in honour of the god Baal. Upon inquiry, however, I learned that my Baal-fires were connected with a Christian, not a Pagan, ceremony, being lighted in commemoration of the appearance of the star, on the night of the Epiphany, to the Wise Men of the East.

The Epiphany is called in catholic countries, “ The

Feast of the Kings," it being supposed, that the three magi, who were guided by the star to Bethlehem, were royal personages. In former times, this festival was kept with great pomp and rejoicing. A large cake, the origin of our Twelfth Cake, was made, and a small bean was put into it. When the cake was cut and divided among the company, the person to whose lot the bean fell was called the "King of the Bean," and was regarded as the master of the ceremonies for the night. At present, the baker who serves a family presents a cake, containing a bean, on this day, which, though seldom very rich, is not ill tasted.

The observation of this festival, of which historical mention is first made by Ammianus Marcellinus,* was introduced into the church in the fourth century. From that time, until Septuagesima Sunday, the ornaments and dress of the priests, as well as the covering of the altar, have been green. Picart observes, that there are persons superstitious enough to believe, that, by wearing about their persons a little image representing the adoration of the kings, with the following inscription,—*"Sancti tres Reges, GASPAR, MELCHIOR, BALTHASAR, orate pro nobis nunc et in horâ mortis nostræ,"*—they may be cured of the headach, fever, and falling sickness, and preserved from accidents, witchcraft, and sudden death. M. Thiers† observes, that, in 1676, he found one of those images, wrapped up in a phylactery of pewter, suspended as an amulet from the neck of a little child. I have met, however, with nothing of this kind in Normandy, where, though religion is at a low ebb, superstition exists still in the greatest activity.

In the short space of time between Christmas and Lent, marriages are numerous in all those parts of France where matrimony is in fashion, as persons wish to take advantage of the church's permission to

* L. xxi. c. 3. † *Traité des Superstitions*, vol. i. p. 6.

make carnivals and mirth precede that dreary season in which Hymen's torch is turned upside down, or rather extinguished; for marriage is not celebrated during Lent.

During the matrimonial season, there was but one wedding in our village. But as weddings, like holydays, excite more attention in proportion to their rarity, all the world was in arms when the important ceremony took place: and no wonder; for, besides that it was the only show of the kind, the personages were important, the bridegroom being the keeper of a little hedge alehouse in Bretagne, and the bride the daughter of no less a person than the clerk of our parish. Though marriage be a sacrament in catholic countries, the ceremonies are not very different from those which prevail in England. There is a little sprinkling of holy water, a little more reading of prayers, and the whole concludes with a mass; but, in other respects, there is nothing remarkable. The truly remarkable part of the business was, that they had been married before, by the civil authorities, and the going to church was therefore an act of supererogation. Many persons do not add the sanction of the church to their union until six or seven years after it has been consummated; and others, reposing on the civil contract, dispense with it altogether. From the statistical tables published this year by order of the French government, it appears that more than one-sixth of the children of the department of Calvados are illegitimate; while in Paris, the same class of children form more than a third. It will soon be a mere joke to marry at all in France; at least this will be the case when the illegitimate outnumber their rivals, which, as things are going on, must very soon happen.

Voltaire complained, that, in his time, the modesty of his countrymen had fled from the heart to take refuge on the lips; and he was no doubt a pretty good judge in these matters. At present, however, it can-

not in general be said, that the lips of the ladies in France are by any means remarkable for their modesty, for they will speak of things which would put an Englishwoman out of countenance. At the same time, their dress is almost prudish. Even at balls and evening parties, their "robes" are only what, I believe, is technically called *half-low*, among the ladies. From beneath the neck of this, however, the rich lace of the *chemise* peeps out, like the leaves of the white rose, full and fragrant, and gives an air of delicate coquetry to the person. In the streets, on the promenades, and in the churches, the ladies of Normandy appear to much advantage. Though not generally handsome, and inclining a little too much to embonpoint, they have still an elegance, and, in spite of their size, an airiness about them, which render them agreeable to the eye, especially as for the most part their complexions are brilliant and clear.

It is certainly a very difficult thing for a foreigner to generalize correctly upon so slippery a subject as national character; and, accordingly, not being enamoured of difficulties, I generalize as little as possible; but there are certain points which strike one too constantly and too forcibly not to lead to a pretty general application. At the same time, I would not have it to be supposed, that I blame the people for the corruption of manners which still prevails among them; all the sons and daughters of Adam are much the same at bottom; but France was for many centuries a despotism, and the revolutionary storm, terrible as it was, could not succeed in completely purifying the atmosphere. The tenets which remain are relics of the good old times,—the times of absolute monarchy, noblesse, and all that. The virtues, the buds of which I fancy one may discover, are the effects of the Revolution,—a tree bitter at the root, but bearing, or rather promising, golden fruit.

In expressing my opinion of the character of the women of Normandy, I by no means rely upon the

scandalous reports of the men, nor upon the very slight opportunities I can have had of observing them, but upon customs and manners prevailing universally, which can bear but one interpretation. If, however, there be another, which has escaped my penetration, let it be given; I shall be the first to rejoice at its discovery. It is certain, then, that, like the women of Italy, Spain, and Hindostan, the ladies of Normandy are thought to be so wanton, or so weak, that they are not to be trusted for a moment alone with a man. The constant and anxious surveillance which mothers, and other elderly relatives, exercise over the young women, is a positive proof of their frailty; for it is the remembrance of what they themselves once felt, and the observation of what is daily taking place around them, in spite of duennaship, which makes them thus suspicious and vigilant. They have, it would seem, no notion of that "deity in the bosom," which, in some countries, is supposed to be the best guardian of a woman's honour, and prefer depending upon material lets and hinderances to love. For this reason, the daughter, as I have already observed, if there be but one, always sleeps with her mother, goes to church with her mother, visits with her mother, makes love, or has it made to her, in her mother's presence. If there be many daughters, which seldom happens in France, they all sleep in the same apartment with their mother, who thus comes to be regarded in the light of a spy. It may be doubted, however, whether all this vigilance and restraint be productive of much good. The powers of invention, which are naturally very great in woman-kind, are only by these means made more active and vigorous; and many a girl of seventeen, who might, under ordinary circumstances, have been remarkable for her simplicity, is thus rendered a very Machiavel in the politics of love. These circumstances cause the women here to regard the state of marriage as the Lacedemonians did that of war,—as a state of

liberty ; and to plot, scheme, and long for it, as captives long for a delivery from bondage.

The above circumstances are only a proof that they are thought to be corrupt ; there is another circumstance which is alone sufficient to account for any degree of moral depravity,—the practice of AURICULAR CONFESSION. If it were now the fashion to derive any monstrosity in human customs from hell, I would say, that the devil had certainly the honour of inventing this incomparable instrument of human corruption ; as a more ingenious, plausible, and powerful device, was never hit upon. It was invented by a clergy without wives, in order to furnish them with an excuse for being alone with the wives of other men. It is not at all astonishing that, in a country where women go to confession, marriage should fall into disrepute ; for it is difficult for a man of any delicacy of feeling to unite himself with a woman who will insist upon disclosing all her thoughts, desires, failings, to another man. It is certain, likewise, that many priests turn the practice to account in another way :—

“ They search the secrets of the house, and so
Are worshipp’d there, and fear’d, for what they know.”

I have conversed upon this subject with priests themselves ; but they could not perceive its enormity, —habit had reconciled them to it. They comfort themselves, moreover, by dwelling upon the bright side of the question, and by glossing over, with the aid of a flimsy and delusive rhetoric, the odious features of an invention which no eloquence of man or angel could make to appear otherwise than diabolical to an unsophisticated mind.

The condition of the clergy in France is far from enviable. On this subject I have had numerous conversations with persons who wish the church well : the priests, although suspected of being favourable to Napoleon, reproach him, and perhaps, justly, with

having degraded the condition of a clergyman. There are, at this moment, twenty-two thousand *disservans*, or curates, in this country, who are all removable at pleasure: and, consequently, being generally poor, are under the most absolute control of the government. For this reason, a priest has, in general, no opinion of his own: he assents or dissents in the monosyllable "yes" or "no;" which, with a few equally important words, make up the sum of his conversation. Such of the *disservans* as are conscious of their want of power over their feelings, keep entirely out of society, which is not to be enjoyed by men over whose heads the sword of Damocles is suspended every moment; and thus contract by degrees a sullen and misanthropic disposition, which totally incapacitates them for social enjoyment.

By this means, the government certainly prevents for the present the manifestation of the enmity which these priests may and must feel towards it; but, at the same time, it nourishes and sharpens their hatred, and renders them desirous of any change which may emancipate them from their slavery. As religion is one of the means by which civil government was originally founded among men, so also is it one of its best preservatives; and, doubtless, those legislators understand their duty, who make it the interest of the ministers of religion to maintain order and law. But the coarse material tie of interest is not enough: men have more than one passion; and, if they are insulted every moment by mementos of their insignificance, of their weakness, of their inutility, they will, in spite of their salary, indulge unfavourable sentiments towards those who hold them in contemptuous thralldom. The present clergy of France may, perhaps, entertain sentiments favourable to the government; but whether they do or not is mere matter of conjecture, for they dare not express the contrary. Even when they speak loyally, they are liable to suspicion; for it is known to be expected from them. I do not mean to say

that the clergy should be independent of the civil law ; but I think they ought to be something more than mere instruments of government. Catholicism, to be sure, is on the wane in France ; but I trust the religious principle is still active in the better portion of the people ; and every man who loves his country, who is anxious for its greatness or its welfare, should assiduously cherish it ; for a state without a religion is a monster whose permanent existence no human institutions can secure.

Although travelling in a particular province of France may hardly seem to authorize my entering into the consideration of the general condition of the clergy in the kingdom, since I have touched upon the question, I will add one or two other remarks. Burke, and many other persons, have imagined, that, because the rich stand at least as much in need of the consolations of religion as the poor, it therefore follows, that there should be rich church dignitaries, on a level, in worldly matters, with these aristocratical sinners, to administer the necessary consolation. But when men are humbled by sickness, or any other grievous calamity, and turn with stricken heart towards the mercy of their Maker, it is rather with those who, from choice or necessity, have mortified their appetites and desires, than with the worldly and the proud, that they love to converse. It is the stoical, self-denying monk, or the plain, unambitious clergyman, who forms the best attendant by the bed of sickness or of death ; and not popes, cardinals, or archbishops. Neither is it necessary, that the man who performs this sacred duty should be distinguished for his genius, or his acquirements. The pomp of learning, no less than the pomp of the world, is foolishness with God ; and the man who truly believes himself about to be stripped of his bodily covering, and called, in the nakedness of his spirit, before the tribunal of that God, will care as little for the logic, the rhetoric, and the style of his ghostly

monitor, or comforter, as for the costliness or splendour of his garments. For these reasons, it appears to me that the interests of religion, that is, of the souls and intellects of mankind, will be best promoted by a clergy moderately paid. From moderate payment to penury, however, there is a long step; and in France the inferior clergy are placed very little above penury. Even the great dignitaries of the church, compared with our own, are poor. The salary of a cardinal is 30,000 francs (£1200) per annum; and he receives at the outset 45,000 francs (£1800,) to defray the expenses of his installation. The salary of the archbishop of Paris, the head of the Gallican church, is 100,000 francs (£4000) per annum; that of the other archbishops, 25,000 francs (£1000) per annum; with 15,000 francs (£600,) to defray the expenses of their first establishment. An ordinary bishop receives 15,000 francs (£600) per annum, with 10,000 francs (£400) at the outset. Of the vicars-general, the first of Paris, 4000 francs (£160) per annum; the second, 3000 francs (£120); other vicars-general from 3000 to 1500 francs (£120 to £60.) The canons of Paris, 2400 francs (£94); other canons, 1500 francs (£60.) The curés of the first class, without pensions, and seventy years of age, 1600 francs (£64); when pensioned, 1500 francs (£60); under seventy, 1500 francs (£60.) The curés of the second class, seventy years of age, and pensioned, 1200 francs (£48); under seventy, 1100 francs (£44); the disservans, or curates, sixty years of age, 1000 francs (£40); under sixty, 900 francs (£36.*)

The author of the *Code Ecclesiastique* laments the smallness of the number of the clergy in France, as well as the lowness of their salaries. It would, perhaps, be better, however, still farther to lessen their numbers, and to increase their salaries; for,

* *Code Ecclesiastique François*, tome II, p. 486-488.

according to Paul Louis Courier, there are already upwards of forty thousand priests in the kingdom, of which twenty-two thousand are *curates*, living upon from thirty-six to forty pounds a-year. M. Heurion states, but I know not upon what authority, that in England there is one clergyman for every 300 inhabitants. In Ireland, among the catholics, one for every 2750; among the presbyterians, one for every 3300. In Spain, there is one priest for every 270 persons. In Portugal, one for every 345. In Italy, one for every 970. In France, one for every 950. In England and Wales, each person on an average pays annually towards the maintenance of the clergy 15 francs 80 cents (about 13s. 2d.) In Spain, about 5 francs 32 cents. In every other country in Europe, from one to two francs, except France, where the tax for the clergy is not more than 79 cents, that is, little more than $7\frac{3}{4}$ d.*

CHAPTER VII.

Images and Superscriptions on the Money of France—Political Leanings of the People—Candlemas—Smuggling—Anecdote of a Cider Hogshead—Murder of a Smuggler—French Cutlery—Earthenware—Shoeing Horses—Cruelty to Animals—Wagon Horses—National Rivalry—Drawing for the Conscription.

A STRANGER who looks at all at the things which surround him, cannot fail to be struck by the singular variety of images and superscriptions which he sees upon the money of France. On one piece, he will perceive the heavy countenance, retreating forehead, hooked nose, and open, foolish looking mouth of "Charles X, Roi de France;" and on the reverse

* *Code Ecclesiastique François*, tome II, p. 483-485, note.

three *fleurs de lis* on a waved field, surmounted by a crown, with two laurel branches curling round it, date 1825. On another, he will see the haughty, scornful, intellectual face of the late great military despot, with the laurel wreaths, won in many a hard fought field, about his temples, and the superscription of "Napoleon, Empereur." On the reverse, a wreath of laurel, surrounding the designation of the coin, and the words "Empire Français" meet the eye. Upon the edge of the legitimate coin, we discover the spirit of the ancient monarchy, during which the king was accounted "the state," in all its nakedness:—"Domine saluum fac Regem!" Instead of this pedantic display of self-love, Napoleon, with grateful and judicious flattery, expresses his conviction, that Heaven interests itself in the destinies of his country:—"Dieu, protège la France," says he. Another imperial coin exhibits on the reverse a souvenir of liberty, in the words "Republique Française, An. XIII." Upon another piece, date 1823, we have the effigy of Louis XVIII, with double chin, hooked nose, retreating forehead, (a truly royal feature,) and quiet, good-natured countenance. We then take up the coin of the year V, with its thrilling, startling obverse, upon which no vestige of royalty appears; but, instead, a gigantic male figure, with a sombre and somewhat savage countenance, embracing with his right hand a female, who bears the cap of liberty upon a wand. On the left hand of this figure of Power, is another female, who, from the star over her head, and the plummet and line in her hand, one might take to be Science, but who is really meant to represent Equality, while the lady on the right is Liberty. Beneath the plummet is a cornucopiæ, and, on the opposite side, a figure, which appears to be that of a bishop or a lawyer, running away with a roll of musty parchment in his hand. The superscription on the obverse is—"Union et Force;" on the reverse,—"*Republique Française*;" and on

the margin, — “*Garantie Nationale*.” Upon the coin of the year VI, the cornucopiæ is omitted, and a cock, signifying the vigilance of the Republic, supplies its place. This was, unfortunately, too much the spirit of the Revolution. Every thing was in a state of change. I observe, that, while time must have been “delving deep trenches in his beauty’s field,” the artists continued from year to year improving the countenance of Napoleon, until at length, in 1813, it had acquired a degree of feminine beauty, hardly compatible with his character. It was, in fact, rather their *beau idéal* of Napoleon, than Napoleon himself.

The striking variety in the images and superscriptions found upon the coins is an outward and visible sign of the inward temper of the souls of the people; some wear the badge of legitimacy, like the mark of the beast in the Revelation, burned, as it were, into their spirit; others, who imagine themselves more patriotic, carry the chains of Napoleon upon their thoughts; but by far the greater number, I think, at least of those who have any opinion or character of their own, are distinguished by an inextinguishable love of freedom, which every day acquires new strength as it grows more enlightened. I have, in fact, met with no example of a Frenchman who was not more or less attached to liberty, more especially among the young and stout-hearted Normans, and who did not as strongly disapprove of the government of Napoleon, as I do myself; though they were always ready to do justice to the vastness of his genius, and the general policy of his conduct.

Tuesday, February 3, being Candlemas day, I went to church, to observe the peculiar ceremony practised on this festival. The mass itself, however, appeared to be much the same as on ordinary occasions; but it was really curious to see the chanters, with little tapers, like farthing rush-lights, in their hands, parading backward and forward through the church,

praying, kneeling, rising up, &c. : they appeared to me very much like a group of children at play, except that they were somewhat more persevering in keeping up the solemn gravity of their countenances. It was bitterly cold, and the chanters, who seemed to bawl out as lustily as possible, in order to keep themselves warm, sent forth volumes of warm breath, which curled and eddied about in the frosty air, looking exactly like so many Chimeras breathing fire and smoke. The sacristan, knowing me to be a heretic, did not present me with a taper; but most of the genteeler portion of the congregation held one in their hands; and one young gentleman, more judicious than the rest, stuck his light between his knees, and enclosing the flame very lovingly with both hands, used it as a fire to warm himself.

Smuggling is carried on to a very great extent in Normandy : every keeper of a cabaret, I am told, has three or four times as much contraband spirits in his house, as of those upon which duty has been paid. Both in the towns and villages, the method pursued to avoid detection, or the bad consequences of it, is as follows :—the honest dealer enters secretly into an agreement with some person who has an empty house, an old dilapidated barn, or some other wretched ruin, in his possession, to be allowed to deposit there, as if by stealth, his smuggled goods : if it be discovered by the exciseman, nobody knows to whom it belongs, or how it came there; if not, it finds its way to the cabaret in some way or other, and is sold. A man, with a hog's-head of smuggled cider in his cart, was caught one day last winter in the street of our village. He was, of course, excessively stupid; he did not remember who had ordered it, or where he was going with it. The exciseman questioned, cross-questioned, threatened : but what could be done ? The peasant only shrugged up his shoulders, opened his eyes as wide as possible, and exclaimed every now and then, “ *Mon Dieu, Monsieur, je n'en sais rien !*—(My God, sir, I know

nothing about it !)'' At length, some poor old woman, who had not a *sous* in the world, came forward, and said it was hers, and that she had ordered it *for her own private drinking*. The exciseman looked very incredulous, the villagers grinned, the stupid peasant, who seemed to have no reluctance whatever to give the old woman credit, rolled the hogshead into her cabin, and there was an end of the affair. In the interior of the cabaret, the legal beverage is ostentatiously exposed, in large white bottles, upon shelves, to be taken down and opened when the exciseman, or any other suspicious person, comes in ; but the smuggled spirits are stowed away, in small dark bottles, in the wife's or maid's pocket, whence they are drawn out for the proper customers. Should the exciseman express his surprise at the small quantity they sell, the fault is put upon the high duties, the hardness of the times, or, perhaps, when they would be particularly satirical, upon the sobriety of their countrymen. Here, as in England, there is a strong prejudice in favour of every thing smuggled : it is invariably thought to be of a superior quality. Battles frequently take place between the smugglers and the excisemen. In the beginning of February last, a man was wantonly murdered by one of these fellows, in a little village, at one end of our village : the scoundrel thrust his sabre into the poor man's belly, and then went coolly away, leaving his victim weltering in his blood, amidst the snow. The villain was apprehended and imprisoned next day ; and if it can be proved, when his trial takes place, that no resistance was offered, he will be guillotined. Scenes like this are an indubitable proof of our progress in civilization, and of the great superiority of modern over ancient manners. It would seem, however, that the cumbrous and expensive governments of modern Europe cannot exist without these things. The prevailing notion appears to be, that society exists merely for the sake of government, not government for the

sake of society : that is, men do not create and obey their governments, that they may live in peace and plenty ; but exist in poverty, and misery, and scorn, that they may be governed splendidly, — whether by despots or by charter, signifies nothing.

In the invention of several little things which add to the comforts, and facilitate the daily actions, of life, the English are certainly before the French, — if French civilization can be said to have reached Normandy. The cutlery, for example, is generally exceedingly poor and clumsy ; and every improvement which is attempted is said to be *à l'Anglais*. They mark their linen with English ink ; they cut their beef steaks and plum puddings with English knives, when they can get them ; and, if they can scrape off their beards with an English razor, they are but too happy. But, in fact, no man can be expected to be patriotic or national in the matter of razors ; for, if the devil himself kept a cutler's shop, and sold a good article, I think no man who has a beard would scruple to become his customer. I was not able to discover a pair of nut-crackers in all Caen, though, I am told, such things have accidentally been seen there ; and was compelled to send to London for a pair or two. The instrument with which filberts and hazel nuts are squeezed to pieces here, is exactly like a country cobbler's pincers, only not half so neat. Walnuts are opened with a knife, at the constant risk of lock-jaw. Fenders, of course, there are none ; and the fire-irons are of the most rude and awkward construction. The ordinary earthenware is exactly of the description which, I suppose, prevailed before the siege of Troy, being at once ugly and brittle ; but the porcelain and finer species of earthenware are frequently extremely tasteful and elegant. The manufacturing of glass seems by no means to have reached the perfection which it has attained among us, though many articles are cheap and pretty. But of all the clumsy

fellows in the country, the locksmiths, I think, bear the bell. Nothing can equal the ugliness and coarseness of their locks and keys, if you except the manner in which they are fastened to the doors. In shoeing horses, also, the Normans are peculiarly inexpert. Three persons are invariably employed in the operation: one man seizes the horse by the head, another takes hold of his foot, turns it up, puts on the shoe, and holds it with both hands, while the third strikes in the nails, with a hammer large enough to have served the Cyclops in beating out the thunderbolts for Jupiter in their smithy in Mount Etna. If the animal happens to move, the whole posse of artists are disarranged, and a thousand curses are showered upon his perverseness. The same number of persons are employed in shoeing an ass. In England, a smith who could not manage the whole business without aid, would hang himself for shame.

Moreover, in walking along the roads in frosty weather, you continually see horses slipping and falling upon the ice, for want of what, I believe, is called *roughing* their shoes. When this happens, the peasants beat the animals in the most brutal manner, though their own stupidity is alone to blame. When I have hinted at this piece of cruelty, I have had our cockfighting, and bullbaiting, and boxing habits, objected to me, and very fairly; though I do not clearly see how our cruelty to cocks and bulls can justify their savage abuse of the domestic animals. It is not difficult, however, to retort accusations of this kind. Every nation has its faults and its absurdities; and it is thus that mankind keep each other in countenance.

The Normans, though remarkably backward in many of the practices of civilized life, are sometimes ridiculed when they do not altogether deserve it. For example, it is customary with the English here, to laugh at them for harnessing their horses in a long single line of eight or ten to their wagons. No doubt it appears very absurd at first sight; but the

practice is in consequence of the badness of the cross-roads and by-roads which are found in this country, and must be followed until those roads shall be greatly improved. For, when a wagon, drawn by a long team of this kind, comes to a slough in the road, the foremost horses enter, and pass it, before those behind are fairly in the mud; and thus, having reached the solid ground, are enabled to drag their brethren, vehicle and all, through the slough. In the same manner we must account for the unusually great diameter of the wheels of these wagons. I have often heard General Miller explain in this way the custom of the Guachos, or inhabitants of the Pampas of South America, who use wagons with wheels ten feet in diameter, and yoke twenty pair of oxen, in a loose manner, to one of these strange-looking vehicles. That the diligences are not drawn by a long single line of horses, is no proof that the practice is the effect of prejudice, but a presumption of the contrary: the diligences, in general, run over good roads, and, when the wagons have the same advantages, they will be drawn by horses yoked two and two, as they are in England.

I have frequently been present at conversations in which the comparative merits of the English and French have been discussed by voluntary champions of both nations; but all that I could ever learn upon such occasions was, that the disputants were losing their time. It is scarcely to be expected that ordinary individuals, such as generally delight to handle these topics, should be able to perceive the superiority of a foreign nation over his own in any thing, when even great and enlightened men, who imagine themselves free from prejudice, find it so difficult to admit the fact. I have often observed, however, that if you keep the general question out of sight, and descend to particulars, people will frequently acknowledge that their neighbours have the advantage over them in this or that respect. I have, for example, met

with several patriotic Normans, who were willing to allow, that, in periodical literature, in newspapers, and in certain branches of industry, the English have ontstripped the French. In return, it was always expected that I should make some concessions in favour of France, which I could conscientiously do. In one respect the French appear particularly ready to yield precedency to the English,—they confess that, as a nation, we have more religion than they; but, in making this concession, I have always been puzzled to decide whether they did not secretly pride themselves upon the circumstance. But, however this may be, every Englishman, who has at heart the glory and greatness of his country, will consider this advantage the greatest that could be conceded,—as the civilization of a people, without religion, is a structure erected upon sand.

Tuesday, February 23.—I went into Caen to see the young men of the department drawn for the conscription. The morning was particularly cold and raw, and every body was wrapped up in cloaks, as in the depth of winter. On this occasion I had a striking example of the utter unconcern with which people regard whatever does not personally interest them: no one could tell where the business would take place, or at what hour. Some thought it would be at the Hôtel de Ville, others at the Palace of Justice, others at the Prefecture, at nine, ten, or twelve o'clock. As I entered the city, I met first one, and then another, of my acquaintance, and inquired about the conscription. “Mon Dieu, je n'en sais rien!—(My God, sir, I know nothing about it!)” was the universal reply. I saw that the only way was to begin at the Hôtel de Ville, and, failing there, to visit in succession all the places where the business could possibly take place. At the Hôtel de Ville I found a soldier standing sentinel at the door: “Is it here,” I inquired, “that they are drawing for the conscription to-day?” The man looked perfectly astonished.

"They are not drawing at all to-day," said he, "but there will be a drawing on the 31st of March." "Now this is provoking," thought I; "there is no getting at this conscription business."

From the Hôtel de Ville I walked away to the other end of the city to the Palace of Justice. Here I met a gentleman, who, though he looked as if engaged in a lawsuit, had the politeness to direct me to the proper place, which was the ancient palace of the Prefecture. With some difficulty I found out this building, in a narrow obscure street near the Lycée. It is a large but mean-looking structure, surrounding three sides of a quadrangular court, and the business of the day was carried on in the central portion. On entering beneath the lofty gateway, I found that the great court was already filled with people, who were all crowding towards the entrance of the old palace, with anxiety, and fear, and every painful feeling depicted on their countenances. There were mothers and fathers come to behold their sons offered up as victims on the altar of war. There, also, were younger brothers and sisters, and other girls who seemed to have all the delicate anxieties of love in their sunburnt faces. In all this vast crowd every eye was turned towards the door, as if really watching the performance of some sacrifice; and I instinctively assumed a commiserating, melancholy tone, as I inquired of a young woman, whom I met coming out of the door, whether it was there that they were drawing for the conscription. She looked in my face, as if to assure herself that there was a being in the world ignorant of what she appeared to know but too well, and replied, almost reproachfully, "Yes, sir."

I made my way as well as I could through the crowd, which consisted chiefly of women, and entered. The vast apartments were thronged to excess, especially about the fatal door, from which a loud official voice was heard to issue, pronouncing the names of

the future defenders of France,—“ Eugene — Victor — Alphonso — Alexis” — while, at each startling sound, an answering voice from the crowd proved that the flower of the Norman youth were about me, replying, perhaps unwillingly, to the call of war. For several minutes I in vain endeavoured to steal a glance of the mysterious apartment whence the stentorian voice of office proceeded; and, upon inquiring among the crowd, was informed that none, except those who were to draw, could enter. However, confiding in the name of *stranger*, which, all the world over, but especially in England and France, is a passport to every place, I at length elbowed my way up to one of the grenadiers, who were parading backward and forward through the throng, to keep clear the way to the door, and demanded whether a foreigner might be permitted to be present at the drawing. The man replied by politely desiring me to walk in; and every body now made way for me.

On entering the room, I saw a long table, extending almost from one side of the apartment to the other, at one end of which sat the officiating person; while a number of military officers, who wore upon their chins “ the beard of Hercules and frowning Mars,” and various other officials, sat round in conclave. A wooden seat, like a Turkish divan, but considerably narrower, ran round the room; and upon this the conscripts were seated side by side. Upon looking round, I found that I was the only individual present not actually concerned in the business of the day. In the centre of the apartment stood the instrument for measuring the conscripts, popularly denominated “ La Toise,” and by the side of it a gigantic grenadier, booted to the hips, and “ bearded like the pard.”

The person charged with this part of the business now called out the name of one of the young men, and the individual seated at the extreme right started up, and ran barefooted across the room to the table upon which there was an urn, covered by a clean

white napkin, containing those little ivory numbers, one of which was to decide his fate. The young man now put his hand into the urn under the napkin, and, upon drawing out a number, shewed it to the man in office, who, in a loud voice, made it known to the crowd. I observed, that when a high number was drawn, the drawer appeared to be pleased, and otherwise when it was a low one. The cause of this I discovered afterwards: Of the two hundred and odd whose fate was decided that morning, only the first forty-eight were to serve in the army. All the numbers above were as so many blanks. A list of all those who drew was entered in the register of the department, with the number drawn marked opposite.

The next operation the conscript had to perform was to step up to the toise, in order to have his height ascertained; and the result was declared with a loud voice by the giant who stood by the instrument. If any one appeared not to be ambitious of getting credit for his full height, the giant put one of his paws upon his back, and the other upon his chest, and thus soon brought him to the perpendicular line. When this part of the ceremony had been performed, the conscript picked up his shoes and his little cap, and made his exit by a different door from that by which he had entered, and another victim followed. The room thus became gradually empty, when one of the officials, taking up a list of names, and reading it aloud, brought in another batch; and thus the room was again filled. Then the same process of drawing, measuring, and shoe-and-cap gathering was repeated; and the crowd again ebbed away, one by one, at the above mentioned door.

I observed, that, among the young men, there occasionally entered a man advanced in years, with bald or gray head, and unsteady footstep, whose appearance would have seemed to indicate that he was free from the conscription. Upon the going up

of these old men to the urn, this circumstance was explained,—they were fathers come to draw for their sons absent on business. I was particularly pleased with the behaviour of the officers towards these old men. It was gentle and humane in the extreme. They thee-and-thou'd them familiarly, like a brotherhood of quakers, and spoke with apparent friendliness of their boys,—which was exactly as it should be. Their fate, poor old fellows, was hard enough in itself; and I thought that it argued a fine spirit in those who thus endeavoured, by an air of kindness and humanity, to make it fall upon them as lightly as possible.

From the questions put, and the answers given, on this occasion, I conjectured that the secret of Theath was not yet very generally divulged in Normandy,—a great number of the young men being unable to read or write. I observed, that by far the greater number of those who wore boots, had no stockings; and that the most genteel among the youths were the most anxious to be measured without their shoes. A few careless, shabby-genteel looking fellows, strutted up to the toise with their boots on, and were thus measured; though allowance, I suppose, was made for the boots. The greater number, however, seemed to be bewildered by their feelings; for, although the toise stood within two yards of them, and they must have known, from fifty examples, that every one who drew was to be measured, they frequently tottered by it towards their shoes or sabots, as if anxious to escape, and had to be brought back by the grenadier.

By far the greater number of these young Normans were short and slight, though they were sufficiently smart and active, and would no doubt make good soldiers. Their small size, and effeminate appearance, might, perhaps, be the effect of city manners; for, in the rural districts of the province, the men are generally tall, and vigorously formed. Several of

the conscripts appeared, in fact, as if they were still children, although the law does not require men to draw before the age of twenty. From the beardless chins, and general physiognomy of the majority of these young men, I should infer, that the age of puberty arrives late here, although nearly all were dark-complexioned; that is, of the temperament in which, in other countries, the virile age is most early. The few fair-haired individuals whom I observed among them, were still less advanced in manhood than the rest.

That insane passion for war, which led the ancestors of the present inhabitants of Normandy to quit their dusky woods, and precipitate themselves, like a torrent, upon several countries of Europe, has now given way to other propensities, — to trade, commerce, industry, and the cultivation of the sciences and arts of peace. The annual period for recruiting the armies is, therefore, seen to approach with terror; and numerous devices are resorted to for evading the chances of being forced into a military life. Some apply to itinerant conjurers, or cunning women, who, for a small sum, pretend to charm the payers, and regulate their destiny according to their desires; others, with more chances of success, insure themselves by the payment of a considerable sum to an insurance company, which provides substitutes for the peacefully disposed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Village Butcher's Shop—Pythagorean Notions—Poultry—Milk—Eggs—English and French Bread—Booksellers' Shops—M. Trébutien—Notions of English Literature—The Annuals—Provincial Literature—Library of an Amateur—A Patriotic Virtuoso—Original Drawing of Poussin—The Poets Sarrazin and Segrain—Madame de Sevigné—Anecdote of Huet, Bishop of Avranches—The Crocodilus Cadomensis.

IN giving the history of village life in Normandy, I ought by no means to forget the butcher's shop. This important place, at our village of Cormelles, was opened every Sunday morning, and at no other time, the butcher living in a distant hamlet, and having to serve various other villages during the week. In those desperately cold mornings which, in December and January last, made us imagine ourselves at Spitzbergen, while I was yet lying in bed, under a mountain of clothes, speculating upon the pains I was to endure the moment I should rise—and, in truth, sometimes debating with myself whether I should rise at all or not—an old woman, upon whom the cold seemed to have no more effect than on a polar bear, used to arrive with the important, but disagreeable intelligence, that the man of beef and mutton was come. I often used to wonder that the fellow never got drunk on the Saturday night, which would sometimes have caused him to oversleep himself on the Sunday. But it never happened: he was as regular as clock-work, and I was compelled, whether I would or not, to sally forth in the snow.

As the English, in Norman villages, never send their servants on those errands, lest carrion should sometimes be purchased for beef, I here met the other gentlemen of the place, with a number of honest

villagers, male and female, who were assembled in order to carry off a portion of the god of the Brahmins for their Sunday's dinner. The scene was highly characteristic and amusing. At the door was tethered the butcher's horse, that patient animal, which, in enormous panniers, still depending from his sides, had borne thither the limbs of certain other animals, which we were about to devour; and here and there, upon the floor, was a dog or cat, as fat as butter, and as fierce as a hyena, eagerly eating up the bits of meat which had fallen from the block. In one corner of the room stood the bed of the "ancient dame, whose domicile it was;" and, at its foot, the tables upon which the whole carnal provisions of the village for a week to come,—legs of mutton, roundings of beef, and ribs of the wild boar,—were piled up in profusion. Bolt upright before the block, stood the priest of this sanguinary temple, with knife in hand, and clad in cerulean blue, to denote, I imagine, his extraordinary innocence; while all around were the worshippers, talking over the affairs of the village, or of the nation, in a good, rough, Norman jargon, with which the language of merry old England was sometimes mingled. The old woman of the house invariably claimed the privilege of carrying home our beef, in order, it was supposed, to enjoy the pleasure of dipping her whiskers in a bumper of neat brandy, which she tossed off like a cup of tea, and this, too, before the church bell had rung for mass in the morning.

With occasional exceptions, the meat in this part of Normandy is of an inferior quality, more particularly the mutton, which is generally as lean and tough as an old shoe. The beef and veal, though somewhat superior, have still an ominous appearance to the eye, and sometimes give rise to very unpleasant suspicions. The pork, for the most part, is good; but it is by no means so plentiful as the other kinds of meat; and, even if it were, the least Jewish person on earth would not like to live entirely on

pork. In walking through the streets of Caen, Falaise, or any other large town, the eye sometimes rests upon a butcher's shop, the sight of which is almost sufficient to render a man a Pythagorean; for it would require no great stretch of imagination to fancy that the soul of one's grandfather had inhabited some of the bodies before one, their physiognomy is so strange and equivocal. In good earnest, I have almost been disgusted into a Brahminical vow by the sight of the carcasses of animals, which had evidently stood as much in need of a dinner during their lives, as any of the hungry wights whom they were fated to regale after death. Moreover, instead of hiding these miserable remains from the light of day, as modesty would appear to command, the butchers, in general, have none of those linen blinds which their brethren of London oppose to the searching glances of Apollo, but leave legs and shoulders, withering and blackening in the sun, in the most barbarous manner.

The poultry, on the other hand, is, in general, remarkably fine; and fresh eggs are abundant and cheap. The milk, likewise, is exceedingly good; and the butter, salt and fresh, is of the most excellent quality. The bread, which is leavened like that of the ancient Jews, is, at first, disagreeable to strangers, but the palate soon becomes reconciled to it, and it is then found to be extremely wholesome and good. The punishment here inflicted on bakers found guilty of selling short weight, or adulterating their bread, being excessively severe, these crimes are so rare, that a pound loaf of bread may, in general, be used as a pound weight, in case of necessity, in order to ascertain the weight of any other article; while the taste and the imagination are not offended by the savour of calcined bones, alum, whiting, &c. which one sometimes detects in the bread of London. Many of the English, however, incapable of accommodating their taste to the bread of the country, get a peculiar

sort prepared expressly for themselves, and called *English bread*; which, being made with *yeast*, is certainly lighter and more spongy than the French bread, though I question whether it be so wholesome. This, moreover, being what is vulgarly called “fancy bread,” is not under the protection of the police; so that people have to depend entirely on their baker’s conscience—a thing not always to be relied upon implicitly. It is remarkable enough, that, properly speaking, there are no biscuits in Normandy; and that, for the most part, the pastry is extremely poor. The bakers pile up huge pyramids of loaves outside of their windows, as a kind of sign, where the flies and the dust of the streets repose upon them at pleasure, and render them very unfit for use.

From the food of the body, I pass, by a very natural transition, to that of the mind. Booksellers, however, are by no means so numerous as bakers, even in London; which seems, notwithstanding, extremely likely to become, in the end, one vast magazine of printed paper: but in the cities of Normandy, the venders of intellectual fare are remarkably few, and ill supplied with books. Even in Caen, the most literary city in the north of France, and celebrated for the distinguished writers it has produced or fostered, there is not one bookseller possessing a good assortment of modern books: a fact which, in reality, tells more strongly against the literary men of the place than against the tradesmen, who would assuredly provide the articles if they were called for. M. Manoury, the oldest and best known bookseller of the city, possesses, indeed, a very large collection of old works, among which I observed several which were rare and valuable; but he has no catalogue, and his books are slovenly and confusedly piled up upon his shelves.

For merely curious books I have no taste, but one has sometimes occasion to consult certain authors, not in ordinary circulation, and *these* one expects to find, in a public library, or among the stock of an extensive

bookseller's shop. Being desirous, in the course of the winter, to refer to several works of this kind, among others, to Zoëga, *De Origine et Usu Obeliscorum*; Paulinus's *Systema Bruhmanicum*; Jablonski's *Pantheon Egyptiacum*; Walchius's *Parerga Academica*; and Cressolius's *Theatrum Veterum Sophistarum*,—I, in the first place, had recourse to the public library; and, having been unsuccessful there, I next tried the shops: but, unless in private libraries, of which I have no knowledge, there is not a single copy of one of these works in all Caen. Still, both M. Manoury and M. Manle, (who has moreover a reading room, and circulating library,) have a great number of valuable old books in their stock; but their prices are extravagant. Even French books, excepting the new ones, might be purchased much cheaper in London.

The bookseller's shop where an Englishman would be most at his ease, however, is that of M. Trébutien, near the Place Royale. Here the new works of any degree of merit are immediately received: a large collection of novels and romances and periodicals are at the service of the ladies; and most of the literary men of the city assemble of an afternoon, to talk over the news of the day, and discuss the merits of poets and philosophers. M. Trébutien himself, of whom I shall more than once have occasion to speak in the course of this work, is a literary man of ability and learning, whose translation of the New Arabian Nights, in three volumes octavo, must, by this time, I imagine, be pretty well known in England. Caen appears, in some measure, to be the foster mother of the Arabian Nights; for it was there that Galland, as M. Trébutien observes, executed the greater part of his exquisite translation, while we owe to it the valuable supplement to Galland's labours.

Of English books I have hitherto seen extremely few in Normandy. It is true that certain English authors, as Shakespeare, Byron, Sir Walter Scott, Campbell, Moore, Wordsworth, &c. are reprinted and

sold in Paris; but, besides that a very large proportion of those reprints are purchased by the myriads of our countrymen residing in France, or find their way across the Channel, on account of their cheapness, I do not find that our literature, in general, is either studied or valued sufficiently in this part of France. One occasionally meets with a person who, having spelled through two or three English books, imagines himself entitled to be merry upon the defects of our great authors, and sports with the holy and sublime conceptions of Milton or Shakespeare, as the politicians of a pot-house discourse on the mysteries of politics. I dare say, if ants ever joke, they make fine sport of the awkwardness of the elephant: the little never comprehend the great. At the same time, there are others among the French altogether superior to so wretched a spirit of nationality; who understand well enough that, without disparaging their own great writers, they may taste the delights of a foreign literature, and extend, as it were, their acquaintance with the great spirits of the earth. The latter class is, in fact, every day becoming more numerous, in proportion as liberal principles, and a masculine taste, the fruits of the Revolution, gain ground; while the other, of course, diminishes in the same proportion, along with the narrow and slavish notions which still remain a blot on the glory of France.

Among the English books which find most favour in the eyes of the French are the annuals. Not only are the Literary Souvenir, the Friendship's Offering, the Keepsake, the Forget-me-not, the Gem, the Winter's Wreath, the Juvenile Keepsake, &c. known and prized; but the choicest articles, and the finest plates, have been selected from them, (the former translated, and the latter retouched,) and published at Paris in an annual called the *Album Britannique*.

The intellectual energies, however, of the Normans are sometimes consumed in the production of what may, perhaps, be termed a provincial literature. Indivi-

duals club together and form societies, antiquarian, agricultural, geological, &c. and throw a degree of imaginary importance over the affairs of their city or province, which appears prodigiously ridiculous to other men. Every department, every city, nay, one might almost say, every town, has its separate history, into which the general affairs of the kingdom are drawn, head and shoulders, in order to swell the volume to the size demanded by the dignity of the theme. For example, the little city of St Lo, upon which the judicious historian of Normandy might bestow a page, has its history swelled out to a volume in octavo, with an introductory discourse one third longer than the history itself: then there are dissertations, memoirs, discourses, notices, &c. without number, and of no earthly use, except to consume time and paper. For my own part, I have never been able to conceive the nature of that enthusiasm which enables a man to spend his whole life in gabbling about the town in which he happens to exist; and still less the folly of those who encourage him. It is mere imbecility to denominate such a childish passion, patriotism; that man is a patriot who benefits, or endeavours to benefit, his country; not he who does his best to kill people with ennui, or, which is much worse, to reduce them to a level in intellect with monks and nuns. I would not be understood by this to condemn a sane desire to investigate the history of past times; but that absurd passion for small antiquities which, both in France and England, occupies ten thousand individuals who would be much better employed in cultivating their cabbage gardens.

One fine morning last spring, I visited the library of a M. Longchamp, of the Rue de Chanoines, at Caen, who has spent the greater part of his life, and considerable sums of money, in collecting together all the books, pamphlets, &c. which have been published on Normandy. Such books as he could not purchase

he had the patience to copy with his own hands ; and I imagine, there could not be less than a hundred volumes, large and small, of manuscripts of this kind. Still a vast number of works on Normandy were wanting, particularly those published in England ; but, on the other hand, a great number of the old poets ; most, or all of the modern poets ; and the most distinguished of the prose writers of the province, were there. The gentleman likewise possessed a large collection of *Facetiæ*, many of which were so rare and curious, that I regretted Dr Dibdin, or some other bibliomaniac, was not there with me, to con over the title-pages, and copy the dates. One of the greatest typographical rarities, however, in the whole collection, was a French translation of Aristotle's *Problems*, in black letter ; supposed to be the first book ever printed at Caen, but there is no date on the title-page.

One of the most curious and extraordinary houses in Caen, however, is that of the amiable and well known antiquarian, M. Pierre Aimé Lair. This gentleman, whom I had met several times since my arrival in Normandy, had kindly invited me to his house, and presented me with a copy of the various little works he had occasionally published. On the morning of my visit, I found him at breakfast. His house, a large and commodious building on one of the branches of the Orne, is laid out as a picture gallery, the walls of every apartment being covered with paintings, drawings, and prints, illustrative of the history, antiquities, arts, and manners, of the Normans. The most valuable article in the collection is an original *sepia* drawing by Nicholas Poussin, who, as is well known, was a native of this province. The subject is the Adoration of the Magi ; and it is treated with that force, freedom, and originality, which one would expect to find in a work of Poussin. From two or three absurdities, however, into which almost every painter of Holy Families has fallen, this piece

of Poussin is not free : the stable of the Nazarean inn, which, from the Scripture narrative, we judge must have been a very wretched place, is transformed into a grand structure, with fluted columns ; Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, is represented as at least eighty years of age ; and the infant Christ, not one day old, and who should therefore have been made to appear unconscious of what was passing, is seated upright on the Virgin's lap, looking with much interest and intelligence at the old Persian fire-worshippers. The other parts of the picture are magnificent. The anxious, instinctive, yet almost doubting devotion of the Wise Men ; the sheer wonder of the bystanders ; the perfect nonchalance of the camel-drivers and slaves in the back ground ; with the camels themselves, and other oriental characteristics, are dashed off with felicitous energy.

Of the other works of art in this curious cabinet, the portraits of four of the mistresses of Louis XIV. are the most striking. These portraits once belonged to the poet Segrais, a native of Caen, who spent much of his time in the profligate court of the Grand Monarque, but returned to spend the evening of his days and die in his native city. If the portraits are faithful likenesses, Louis's mistresses, like his wigs, had more bulk than beauty to boast of ; being, in fact, nothing more than fine, plump, voluptuous looking women, possessing none of those airy, spiritual graces which have sometimes shed a kind of glory over ladies of their profession, and blinded very grave and sober historians.

One of the apartments of this patriotic virtuoso is dedicated to the poets Sarrazin and Segrais, men who once thought themselves secure of immortality, though their verses and their wit are already on the threshold of oblivion. Here, in the literary chamber of M. Lair, however, their fame appears as fresh as ever. On the walls we see their portraits, dingy engravings in the hard manner of the old French engravers ; and on the

mantel-piece observe their works, new neat reprints, the effect of the gratitude and respect of their townsmen. Near the portraits are specimens of the handwriting of these Norman bards, as well as of that learned Theban, Menage, who commented Diogenes Laertius, and was the friend of Segrais. On the same wall is the portrait of another native of Caen, illustrious for his various erudition, and for numerous works now more frequently quoted than read; I mean Huet, Bishop of Avranches. Respecting this portrait, M. Lair related to me an anecdote, which may perhaps be worth repeating. When it was first published, Huet's fame, it seems, was not sufficient to raise a demand for his likeness, and the artist appeared to be in danger of losing his labour. But the man who has but one string to his bow will never make a figure or a fortune in this world: the name of Huet was erased from the plate, and that of St Exuperius, the imaginary first Bishop of Bayeux, inserted in its place; which being done, the portrait, now become that of a saint, had a great run, and amply repaid the double ingenuity of the engraver. So the honest people of France, we see, who scorned to give their money for the effigies of a learned and virtuous contemporary, were deluded into a good action, as, of old, children were seduced into taking physic, by having the brim of the cup honied over by well meaning imposture.

Madame de Sevigné, as the reader, no doubt, is aware, was not a native of Normandy; but, having in her Letters said complimentary things of Caen, she is one of those individuals whom the people of Caen admire. I myself expect to be some day or another enumerated among the patrons of this grateful and pleasant city, for I have many things to say in its favour; but then, I am neither a countess nor a count, which may make some difference. In the chamber which M. Lair has consecrated to the memory of this immortal gossip, are the portraits of the lady and her daughter, with views of Les Rochers, and the other

chateaux of the family. The mother was a much finer, as well as more able woman, than the daughter; and the costume in which she is represented is infinitely more becoming,—that of the latter exposing the bosom in a manner not at all consonant with modern ideas of delicacy. There is also a leaf or two of laurel, plucked from the plantations of Les Rochers, in Brittany, the family seat of the Seignés, and specimens of the handwriting of the countess, her daughter, and her granddaughter. The first is masculine, the second less so, and the third still less so than the second. These literary relics, however trifling they may seem, have an interest and a value for as many as hunger and thirst after renown, since they are a species of link between us and the illustrious dead.

The other articles of this curious collection have all a degree of interest, which might, perhaps, justify a more extended notice—more particularly a cast of the portions of a fossil crocodile, dug out of the quarries of Allemagne, and denominated by naturalists the *crocodilus cadomensis*; but Caen has so many things demanding attention, that it is impossible to bestow a great deal of space upon each. We were accompanied through the various apartments by the obliging antiquary himself, by a Mr Burke, and by the Count Pierre de Revedin, a Venetian gentleman, who had visited England, spoke English with considerable facility, and was loud in his praises of our country. M. Lair is a plain but pleasant looking man, who appears to be extremely well informed, and is distinguished for the snavity of his manners in his intercourse both with his own countrymen and with foreigners. It is to him, in fact, that most strangers, desirous of seeing the curiosities of Caen, apply; and I certainly am not acquainted with any person better calculated to perform so troublesome an office; since, in addition to a perfect knowledge of the localities, he possesses a degree of politeness, which no importunity or ingratitude appears competent to destroy.

CHAPTER IX.

Hospital of Caen—Abbey aux Dames—Fever Wards—Character of the Patients—Anatomical Museum—Tower of the Abbey—Tomb of Queen Matilda—Admirable Panoramic View of Caen—Absurd Idea of the Picturesque—The Subterranean Chapel—Ducarel and Dr Dibdin—History of Matilda's Tomb.

IN visiting the Hospital of Caen, which now occupies the ancient convent of the Abbey aux Dames, or of the Trinité, I was accompanied by Mr O'Rourke, a young Irish medical student, long resident at Caen. In approaching the building from the Rue des Chanoines, one of the pleasantest streets in the city, and therefore chiefly inhabited by the English residents, I observed that the lower portion of the western tower was new; and my companion, whose duties brought him every day to the hospital, described to me the painful and dangerous process by which the decayed stones were extracted from the wall to make room for the new ones, while very little violence, perhaps, would have brought down the whole tower upon the heads of the workmen. When repairs of this kind are effected in an ancient building, it would require very little expense or ingenuity to cause the new portions to harmonize with the old, by washing them over with a gray preparation, or by covering them with the paper coloured cement. Something of this sort is absolutely requisite, to prevent that shock which the eye receives from a medley of novelty and antiquity, and which causes one to regard a noble structure in the same light as

“A patched dog-hole, eked with ends of wall.”

I particularly remarked the mean and disagreeable

effect of these fillings up of the breaches of time in Talbot's Tower at Falaise, where the gray, storm-beaten masonry of the fifteenth century is brought into startling contrast with a bit of "spick and span new" construction of yesterday. Not that I think an old wall better than a new one, but that one hates to see this January and May sort of an union, even in stone and mortar.

The Abbey of the Trinity, being still a nunnery,* as well as an hospital, is surrounded by high walls, and iron gates, and a soldier constantly stands sentinel at the entrance. Having passed these gates, we crossed to a wide court, formed on one side by a wing of the building, and on the other sides by a series of out-houses and offices. Coming up to the door of the convent, we touched the bell, and the door, opening by springs, admitted us into a spacious entrance-hall, where we found a nun sitting behind a grated window, who gave us directions where to find our guide.

The gentleman who performed the office of cicerone for us, was one of the surgeons of the establishment, an Englishman, and an old acquaintance of my companion. The first ward into which we entered was one of those apartments appropriated to military invalids, who seemed, from all that I could observe, to be by far the most numerous class of sick. It was a room about one hundred and fifty feet long, along the centre of which ran two rows of wooden pillars. On each side were the beds, with the foot towards the centre of the apartment. They were, perhaps, somewhat too close to each other, and, consequently, too numerous; but they appeared to be neat and clean. There are four wards of this size; two for men, and two for women.

* I have not been able to ascertain exactly the number of prisons of this sort which are found in France, but they must still be very considerable. The life of a nun, which appears so tranquil and holy to the ignorant, is the most wretched, and frequently the least pure, that can well be imagined.

When we entered the female ward, where there were numbers confined to their bed, we had a specimen of the social qualities of the ladies; for numerous voices were busy on all sides in banishing silence and its offspring ennui. These vast apartments are warmed by immense pipes, which pierce the building from bottom to top, and by fires kindled in stoves, which convey their smoke to these pipes. Around the fire was a cluster of women, young and old, engaged in the universal occupation of making lace, in which many of those in the beds, or sitting beside them, were likewise employed. Here were sickness and misery manufacturing ornaments for beauty and youth. The soldiers, on the other hand, whose business it is to kill and be killed, as Voltaire observes, to get their living, were playing at cards around their fire; while others, farther advanced in convalescence, but equally disposed to be idle, were pitching *sous*, like children, under the piazzas below, reminding me, very strongly, of the lazy old inmates of Greenwich Hospital, lounging about Blackheath or Greenwich Park, reading novels, or, as Moore says, "sipping beer in the sun."

The number of sick at this time in the hospital was about three hundred; but, during the winter, they had been far more numerous,—nearly six hundred, I believe; though the only complaint, perhaps, under which the majority were labouring, was the want of food and fire-wood. Even such of the poor as were not attacked by disease, were invited, in the severe weather, to warm themselves, and take soup daily, at the hospital; and thus, in all probability, the lives of many were saved. Every care seems to be taken of those who take refuge here; the whole building being extremely neat, clean, and well ventilated. Nevertheless, in passing through the fever wards, I observed a heavy cadaverous scent, as if death were already in the room.

The clean linen, for the sick, is warmed before it is

put on, in nice clean little brazen ovens, placed, for the sake of economy, over the large fires which warm the water for the baths. These baths, which are on the ground floor, in a suite of apartments occupying the north wing of the building, are ranged in a double row along the centre of the room. These rows are separated from each other merely by two large brass pipes, kept very clean and bright, which convey the cold and hot water. Out of these main pipes spring up others, in the shape of a swan's neck and head, which, being turned over the baths, pour out the water, the one hot and the other cold, in the greatest profusion. Besides these, there are steam and shower baths, admirably contrived. In fact, I question, whether a more important or better regulated establishment of the kind can be found in any provincial town, even in England.

There is a small anatomical museum attached to the hospital, which contains several very curious skeletons, both of men and the inferior animals. Among others, there are the skeletons of a frog, a sparrow, a monkey, and a human glutton; together with the stomach of the last-mentioned animal, of prodigious size. There is likewise an infant of monstrous formation, preserved in spirits, which looks as horrible as any thing unnatural can look, and might, perhaps, puzzle the science of M. Geoffroy St Hilaire, or of M. Le Sauvage; though the latter gentleman assures me, that he has explained the laws of nature which regulate or misregulate "all that."

Neither that portion of the building, which is inhabited by the nuns, nor the church, which is supposed to form a part of the convent, can be entered by men. However, our obliging cicerone obtained from the lady abbess the key of the great central tower, which, though really forming a portion of the church, is not regarded as too holy for the male moiety of human nature, — so nice are the distinctions

of superstition. In making our way towards this tower, we crossed a small court, surrounded entirely by portions of the church and of the convent, and beheld in the northern wall two extremely little doors, the one of which led to the place of our destination, and the other, over which were the words "*Chapelle Souterraine*," to the crypt beneath the choir. Into this, it was thought the nuns would not permit us to descend; so we took the other route, and, opening the mysterious-looking little door, ascended a narrow, dark, winding stair, such as Mrs Radcliffe describes in her romances, until we reached a small gallery, just wide enough to allow one person to squeeze himself along between the pillars and the wall.

From this gallery we obtained a view of the whole church,—excepting a small portion then undergoing repairs, and therefore divided off by a temporary partition of boards,—even of that part which belongs exclusively to the fair sisterhood, and is enclosed with thick curtains. One solitary nun was there at her devotions: she was on her knees, her hands were clasped upon her breast, and her face was turned towards the tomb of Queen Matilda, the foundress of the abbey, which stands in the centre of the choir. Her prayer was inaudible; her form was, for some time immovable; and I looked down upon her with a degree of pity not unmingled with respect. The church was still and silent as the grave, except that the wind occasionally shook the ancient casements, and moaned along the aisles. At length, the nun arose, in an awkward scrambling manner, from her knees, and left the church, without appearing consciousness that she had been overlooked.

The gallery where we stood overhangs that part of the choir in which the altar, removed or destroyed during the Revolution, had originally been placed; and from thence we could see those grotesque capitals which surmount the pillars of the rotunda, and which,

according to M. d'Anisy,* were anciently concealed by the ornaments or accompaniments of the altar: these capitals have, instead of foliage, human faces, swans, and other birds, monsters, and animals of various kinds, sculptured upon them; and, among the rest, a head, which the above mentioned author supposes to be that of William the Conqueror. On the walls are several paintings, representing sacred subjects, some of which appeared to possess considerable merit. The pavement of the choir is formed of small diamond-shaped slabs of black and white marble, alternating with each other.

Leaving this gallery, we ascended in darkness, by the narrow staircase above commemorated, towards the summit of the tower, guiding ourselves by a rope which ran up along the centre of the turret. We had to cross some portion of the roof of the church during this ascent; and I looked, but in vain, for the place where my worthy predecessor, Dr Dibdin, narrowly escaped breaking his neck, an action which he relates in mock heroics, in his affected but amusing *Travels*. The building, however, was a manufactory when the doctor visited Normandy, and has since undergone many repairs, and been restored to its original destination.

When we had fairly reached the roof of the tower, we enjoyed a noble view of Caen and its vicinity, the whole city, and the country for several miles round, being stretched out before us like a map. Every street, every church, nay, every private house, could be distinctly seen from this place, together with the various roads branching off from the city, towards Bayeux, Villiers, Falaise, and Rouen, and the numerous small villages with which the whole country round is thickly studded. The abbey church of St

* *Notes on DUCAREL's Anglo-Norman Antiquities*—French Translation, p. 111.

Etienne, the foundation of William the Conqueror, towering aloft at the other extremity of the city, seemed but a stone's throw distant; and one might almost fancy that the nuns of the one establishment could converse, from this position, with the monks of the other. The finest object, however, in the whole prospect, was the Orne, one of those roads which, according to the admirable expression of Pascal, move beneath the traveller, and bear him, without any effort of his own, upon his journey. This river, flowing from south to north, divides ere it approaches the city into two branches, and, meeting again a little below the town, forms an island, upon which a large portion of Caen is built. The valley of the Orne is the only part of the view in which any patches of wood are discoverable, excepting the park of the convent immediately beneath our feet, as it were, in which there was a small grove, now beginning to put forth its leaves.

Compared with the view from the tower of the cathedral of Coutanus, the promenade at Avranches, or Talbot's tower at Falaise, this prospect is, of course, poor; but, in summer, when all the surrounding plains are covered with the rich verdure of the young corn, and when every tree and bush within the circle of the horizon have put on their summer garb, it is certainly not wholly destitute of charms.* What Mr Cohen, however, could be dreaming of when he talked of any landscape in this neighbourhood which would have delighted the "old masters," is more than

* Dr Dibdin, after having had the "noble ambition" to ascend to the top of this tower, and approach the "starry vault," for which he triumphs over Ducarel, — who, however, did not climb up, merely because he was not allowed to do so, — comes down again, and there's an end of it. He might have discovered, without climbing to the top of the tower, that the site of the abbey was good; which is all he says upon the subject.

I can conjecture.* Except the little woody promontory at Mondeville, which is a gem in its way, but too small to make any figure at a distance, there is nothing in the neighbourhood of Caen deserving the name of *landscape*, unless, indeed, we use the term to express any wide extent of country.

Immediately under the walls of the convent are the gardens, in which we remarked that one of the flower-beds, which were surrounded by borders of dwarf box, was shaped like a heart, to intimate, I suppose, that the inmates of that prison had not forgotten they possessed one. From the elevated position we now occupied, we could see very distinctly into that portion of the abbey which is sacred to the fair sisterhood themselves; but none of them made their appearance, though we saw several walking under the piazzas, on the profane side of the walls.

Descending from the neighbourhood of the "starry vault," as Dr Dibdin would say, we next demanded the permission of the nuns to visit the crypt, or "subterranean chapel," as they are pleased to call it, and were more successful than Ducarel was, when monks and nuns were in their glory in France. The Revolution appears to have been a great teacher of genuine civility and politeness, as well as of other useful lessons; for a "lady abbess" would now no more think of refusing a respectable foreigner permission to enter a chapel, than she would of swallowing her crucifix and beads. The voice of public opinion is now heard, even in convents; and, if they have not

* "After leaving Caen," says he, "the traveller will not fail to linger on the little hill which he ascends just after passing by the first crucifix. Here he enjoys *a lovely prospect, such as delighted the old masters.*" A little farther on, he talks of the views being free from all "traces of work-shops and manufactories, or *their pollution*;" and says that, from this distance, "the city assumes a character of quiet monastic opulence, comforting the eye and the mind."

the fear of God before their eyes, they have at least that of the public press, — which produces some good among them.

To the subterranean chapel we descended by the light of a lantern, which our guide, who seemed pretty well acquainted with the *local*, carried before us. On entering the chapel,* we could at first see nothing, excepting the candle itself; but our eyes, accommodating themselves quickly to the obscurity which surrounded us, walls, pillars, and capitals,

* As that learned and able antiquary, Ducarel, whom my amusing predecessor, Dr Dibdin, continually abuses and copies, could not obtain permission to examine this crypt, his French translator undertakes to give a description of it in a note, and adds a lithographic drawing, by which a still more exaggerated idea of the place is conveyed, than that insinuated in the letter-press. This crypt, or chapel, was dedicated to St Benedict, but is more frequently denominated “The Tomb of Queen Matilda.” “The architecture,” says M. d’Anisy, is *extremely elegant*. Thirty-six columns, with capitals singularly varied, appear to support the roof; and a kind of stone divan, which I did not perceive, runs round the whole chapel. The altar is modern; for on one of the stones which compose it, the name of Montmorency is still legible. In a hollow of the southern wall the bones dug up in the chapter of the abbey are deposited, with the following inscription: — ‘Bones found in the ancient chapter of the Ladies of the Trinity, and deposited here on the 4th of March, 1818.’ In one of the stone coffins, the bones, crosses, and veils of two abbesses, were found. The threads of the linen, and even the leather of the shoes, were well preserved, as were likewise certain branches of laurel which had been deposited with the bodies; but the bones themselves were of the darkest lilac colour, and covered with small crystals of phosphate of lime. A small ball of amber, or succinum, which ornamented the cross of one of the abbesses, had assumed the yellow colour of resinous quartz. In making excavations in this ancient chapter, two gold rings were likewise discovered, which were flat on the inside and rounded on the out. On the interior of one of these rings were two Y’s interlaced; and on the other the same letter reversed, with a heart pierced with arrows, and the letters D and C interlaced.” — See D’Anisy’s *Translation of Ducarel*, p. 118—120. — *Note*.

started, as it were, out of the darkness, and we began to perceive the form and structure of the place. Both the accounts of it I had read, and the engravings which I had seen, as is very generally the case, had given me an extremely exaggerated idea of this crypt. It is very little larger, or more imposing in appearance, than a good coal-cellar; and, except that there are a number of small pillars, an old stone altar, now no longer used, I believe, for religious purposes, and the broken remnants of two or three stone coffins, one might very easily mistake it for a wine vault. The pillars, which are, I think, thirty-six in number, are small, not more than two feet nine inches in circumference, some, perhaps, being a little more, and others less. The capitals, in the same grotesque style as those above in the choir, are roughly wrought, and there are no two resembling each other. A faint light descends into this vault, through an aperture in the western wall, but merely sufficient to bewilder the eye. I could not fancy, with Dr Dibdin, that I saw the shade of the royal foundress of the abbey flitting about in the darkness; as I should hope that Matilda, whether dead or alive, would have the good taste to keep herself out of this hole, intended in reality, perhaps, to contain the wine with which she and her fair Benedictines regaled themselves after dinner.

Both the church, and the convent attached to it, were erected as an expiation for the crime of marrying within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity. The Duke of Normandy was too powerful a prince to be ordered to separate from his wife; but the Pope, before whom the affair had somehow or other been brought, was too politic to pass over the matter entirely, and ordered the guilty couple to erect each a religious edifice, into which a number of idle people of both sexes might retire, and live at their ease. This was done; and the Abbey aux Dames, and the

Abbey of St Etienne are the monuments of the Pope's cunning, and the Duke's capability of spending money. The former of these edifices is said to have been erected in 1066, the year in which the conquest of England was achieved. Sixteen years afterwards, when the coffers of her husband had been replenished by the wealth of England, the convent was munificently endowed by Matilda,* who, dying on the 2d of November, in the following year, was buried in the middle of the choir of the church, at the distance of a few paces from the principal altar.

In this tomb the bones of Matilda remained in peace, until the year 1562, when the Huguenots, or Calvinists, of Caen, were seized, like the Iconoclasts of old, with a passion for opening coffins and destroying sculpture. These honest people, having, in the warmth of their zeal, torn the body of the Conqueror of England from its narrow house, next proceeded to uncoffin the mortal remains of his Queen. The lady abbess in vain entreated them, with prayers and tears, to spare the ashes of the foundress of the convent; the Huguenots regarded her as a wretched idolatress, pleading for her gods, among whom, per-

* Matilda herself was the first abbess, and Cecilia, her eldest daughter, was the second. None but ladies of noble blood could be admitted into this convent, the annual revenue of which, in Duearel's time, was estimated at 70,000 livres. This abbey was likewise regarded as a fortress in former times, and contained a garrison, the captain of which enjoyed a salary of nearly one hundred crowns, or six hundred livres, per annum. How the nuns were protected from this garrison, we are not informed; but it was a strange idea to quarter soldiers in a convent, where none but ladies of "noble blood" were admitted. Some traces of the fortifications were still visible in 1767. At the same period there were five convents, six monasteries, and three hospitals, besides several other religious establishments, at Caen. Many of these causes of national beggary and misery were swept away by the Revolution; and a great many nuns of the present day think it necessary to be useful to the community.

haps, they imagined that William and Matilda were enumerated; and, having overthrown the royal sarcophagus, dashed to pieces the statue which had surmounted it. This being done, they next opened the coffin, and examined the remains of the dead. The sight of the mouldering bones and lifeless dust brought them to themselves. Their fury died away; and the body seems to have been suffered to occupy its coffin in peace.

An individual among the rebels, observing, upon one of the fleshless fingers of the Queen, a gold ring, set with a sapphire, took it off, and presented it to the lady abbess, Anne de Montmorency, who accepted and preserved it; and afterwards gave it to her father, the Baron de Conti, Constable of France, when he accompanied Charles IX. to Caen, in 1563. Some years after these events, the fragments of this tomb were collected, and placed together in the manner in which they were seen in the time of Ducarel.

The subsequent history of this royal tomb may not, perhaps, be thought unworthy of being related. In 1793, the bones of Matilda were a second time unhoused, not indeed by heretics as before, but by men animated with political rage and a wild detestation of every thing royal. When this storm also, the most terrible and salutary which the history of human nature records, was over, the inhabitants of Caen again began to recall their ancient affections; and hopes being entertained that the "*capsula plumbea*," in which the Queen's ashes had been enclosed in 1707, might have escaped the researches of the king-haters of 1793, the Count de Montlivault, prefect of Caen, and the bishop of Bayeux, caused new researches to be made, but with views very different from those of their predecessors. Having raised two or three flags in the pavement of the choir, directly over the spot where it was supposed the ashes had been deposited, they discovered a stone coffin five feet

four inches long, twelve inches deep, and from twelve to twenty inches broad, French measure, in which the leaden box alluded to in the ancient inscription, which had excited the search, was found enclosed. By the side of this box there was also found a portion of the frontal bone of a skull, enveloped in aromatic herbs, and carefully wrapped up in a piece of linen still in good preservation. The leaden box itself, moreover, contained several bones, in various stages of decomposition, which, having been closely examined by several distinguished anatomists, were declared to have belonged to a woman of Queen Matilda's size. No doubt being now entertained respecting the genuineness of the bones, they were replaced in the leaden box, together with a small glass tube, hermetically sealed, containing the process-verbal of the discovery, after which the whole was sealed up again. A new tomb, resembling that which had been destroyed during the Revolution, was now constructed; and the tumulary black marble, bearing the original inscription in Norman characters, which had been preserved and deposited for greater safety in the church of St Etienne by M. Lair, was brought and placed over it.*

* Lechaudé d'Anisy's *Translation of Ducarel*, p. 116—118.
—*Note.*

CHAPTER X.

The Bon Sauveur—Treatment of the Insane—School of the Deaf and Dumb—Josephine Foulon—Black-eyed Nun—Conjugation of the Verb, “to Love”—Dictionary of the Deaf and Dumb—The Abbé Jamet—His Bigotry—M. Lammoroux’s Flattery of the Abbé—History of the Bon Sauveur—Medical School—Lesson in Anatomy—Anecdote of a “Subject”—M. Ameline’s Pieces of Artificial Anatomy—Facility of Procuring Subjects—Resurrection Men—Regulations respecting Funerals—English who die in France.

ONE of the most useful and important establishments in France is the Bon Sauveur at Caen, which is at once a vast lunatic asylum, a school for the instruction of the deaf and dumb, and an ordinary seminary for the education of ladies. This institution is at present under the direction of the Abbé Jamet, and about one hundred nuns, who devote their time, and whatever talents they may possess, to the service of the unfortunate,—which is certainly much better than mewing themselves up in cloisters to play with rosaries, or die of chlorosis or ennui.

About the middle of last March I visited the Bon Sauveur, in company with the curé of Cormelles, an old acquaintance of the Abbé Jamet, though not a jesuit. I found the abbé to be a plain man, with a fox-coloured wig, and countenance expressive of an extraordinary degree of shrewdness, though by no means disagreeable. He received us very politely; and, being engaged with a stranger who had just called on him upon business, commissioned one of the nuns to conduct us round the establishment. The

buildings are immense, covering, according to the computation of M. Lamoroux, fifteen acres of ground, —a space larger than that occupied by the base of the great pyramid. The principal structure—of regular and elegant architecture—presents its long white façade towards the meadows of the Orne, and is visible from the Cours de la Reine, from the upper part of Vancelles, and from the road to Allemagne. Numerous smaller edifices, appropriated to various uses, cluster, as it were, about the principal building, and altogether form a sort of little town, inhabited by bakers, brewers, shoemakers, washer-women, &c. where every thing consumed in the establishment is manufactured.

The greater part of the principal building is occupied by the insane, who, as far as we could conjecture from appearances, are carefully and humanely treated. Thick lofty walls divide the edifice into two parts, of which the one is appropriated to women, and the other to men. The patients are divided into classes, according to the symptoms of their disorder, or the peculiar form in which it manifests itself; and these classes are again subdivided according to the different amount of the pensions they pay. Some individuals have a house, with a small garden, entirely to themselves; others a single apartment; others have neatly furnished chambers; and all are said to have the power to be alone when fatigued with society, and to return to company when solitude becomes irksome to them. All, however, have proper keepers, who never quit them, but endeavour, by mildness and attention, to render their unhappy condition as little miserable as possible. The number of these keepers of course varies according to circumstances. Two physicians daily visit the establishment; and the nuns, whose care and attention are infinitely more valuable than physic, watch at once over the patients and their keepers. Every where we saw evident proofs that

it was women who had the principal share in the management of this institution; for neatness, cleanliness, elegance, and a rigid attention to decorum, reigned throughout. The bedchambers are light, large, lofty, and airy rooms, overlooking the gardens, and commanding a view of the fine green meadows of the Orne, of the Cours de la Reine, and of the hill of Allemagne. These apartments are boarded and papered, quite in the English way, and both the beds and the windows have fine white curtains. Two small apartments at the east end of the building form the wardrobe of the ladies, where their bonnets, shoes, and linen, are kept in nice clean deal *armoires*, always under lock and key. The sheets, table linen, &c. which were shewn us by the nun, were beautifully clean, and the caps, frills, collarettes, handkerchiefs, &c. were *done up* with as much taste and care as if they had been designed for the most sane of the ladies without. It being a fine day, several of the unfortunate beings were walking about in the garden, the greater number in mournful silence, though some seemed to be busy in chattering to each other or to themselves. In winter and in rainy weather, they walk in long, airy corridors, overlooking the gardens, where we saw one poor lady whose only symptom of insanity was that she thought herself a duchess! We did not visit the quarter appropriated to the male patients.

The number of persons at this time confined here was three hundred; but the names of eighty more were already inscribed in the list of candidates for admission, and it was expected that in the course of another month, or at least as soon as apartments could be got ready for their reception, the number would be increased to four hundred. When entirely completed, it is calculated that the establishment will contain accommodations for six hundred inmates. At this period the number of male and female patients

was nearly equal. It is said that a *considerable* number of individuals have left the institution perfectly restored to their reason; but, as a list is no doubt kept of all such individuals, it would have been no difficult matter to have stated the exact amount.

From this melancholy portion of the establishment, which we were very glad to quit, we repaired to the school-room, where the deaf and dumb are imbued with the elements of human knowledge. The apartment into which we were first conducted was that in which the girls were taught, where two nuns carried on simultaneously the business of instruction. Chairs were placed for us, and a pretty mute ran and placed mats for our feet. The number of the girls, who were of all ages between seven and eighteen, appeared to be about thirty: each of them wore a brown Holland pinafore, and a species of nightcap, which, at first sight, gave them the air of being invalids; but the idea was quickly dispelled by a glance at their rosy faces.

The room, which might be about forty feet long, was lined to a considerable height with boards painted black, upon which the girls were all employed, when we entered, in writing with chalk, the nuns looking on, and dictating by signs. The first things which struck us were the elegance of the handwriting, the correctness of the orthography, and the rapidity with which their fingers moved along the wall. The nun whom we first addressed, now requested us to put some question to one of the girls, who was at once the prettiest and the cleverest pupil in the school. The curé inquired, "Who was Moses?" and the nun interpreted his query to the girl. I suspect, from the nature of the education they receive, that this was one of the easiest questions which could have been thought of; but it was the first that suggested itself, and answered the purpose very well. The girl first wrote out the query, and then added underneath

the following reply to it: "Moses was a man who had been exposed in infancy on the banks of the Nile, and was educated at the court of Pharaoh: he was a man chosen by the Lord to lead the Jews out of Egypt, to deliver them from the tyranny of Pharaoh." The girl, whose name was Josephine Foulon, from the département de la Manche, was about fifteen years old, and had been four years and a half at the institution. Other questions of a similar nature were put to her, and she replied to them all with the same rapidity and precision. It was not from her answers, however, so much as from her air and manner, that one judged of the character of her mind: the eyes, accustomed to perform, in some measure, the offices of the tongue and of the ears, were beautifully eloquent, and literally flashed and sparkled with intelligence. It was truly delightful to watch her countenance, while the hands, and figure, and looks of the nun, were speaking to her. I never beheld the soul make more efforts to impress its emotions and conceptions upon the lineaments of the face: the lips, the cheeks, the eyes, and every separate muscle in the countenance, were called into action. Nevertheless, there was no distortion,—no pain; all was ease, and gracefulness, and pleasure.

From observing this sweet and interesting creature, I proceeded to examine the progress of the younger and less able pupils, who were under the direction of another nun. With this lady, who was about twenty-five years of age, and who owned a pair of the finest black eyes in Normandy, I conversed a good deal; and she was kind enough to undertake, of her own accord, to conjugate the verb "to love," for my edification. The present tense is formed by making the sign of the personal pronoun, which I forget, and by placing the two hands upon the region of the heart: this action my pretty nun performed so naturally, so tenderly, and with so soft an expression of countenance, that I

am convinced it was not long since her heart had learned to conjugate that verb in good earnest. She proceeded through the various tenses of that sweetest of all verbs, and had nearly concluded, when the Abbé Jamet interrupted her, by coming over to shew me a portion of the dictionary of signs, which he is at present employed in composing. Of the merits of such a work, it is, of course, impossible to judge from a cursory inspection; but, from two or three articles which I examined, it seemed to me that the author had improved upon the theory of the Abbé Sicard, which has been hitherto followed at the deaf and dumb institutions of Paris, Bourdeaux, &c.

Among the boys, there were several who had made some progress in Latin, and it was intended soon to introduce the study of Greek. The lad whom I examined was the nephew of the Cardinal de la Fare. In the course of my visit, I inquired whether the abbé had any English boys among his pupils; but he replied, with considerable hesitation and confusion, that it was not possible to receive protestant pupils, since *one* religion only could be *taught* in such an institution. I did not at that time know that it was this same abbé who had, some years before, caused all the protestant pupils to be suddenly expelled from the Lycée at Caen, otherwise I would have spared him the pain my question must have given him.

The number of pupils does not appear to increase. Six years ago, there were between fifty and sixty, of whom twenty were instructed gratis; and there are not more at present. The number of teachers is disproportionately great, not less than fifteen persons being employed in communicating instruction to about fifty. As I have not examined the other similar institutions which exist in France, I am not competent to decide whether the method pursued in this of the Bon Sauveur, be or be not superior to them; but it is very certain, that the mode of reasoning by which

the Abbé Jamet's friend, M. Lamouroux, attempts to prove its superiority, is lamentably absurd: "Several times," says he, "in the course of the year, the Abbé Jamet causes his pupils to repeat, in public meetings, the lessons they have been taught; and the rapidity and precision of their replies to such questions as are put to them, prove, in the most convincing manner, how much the method of their teacher is superior to all other methods."* Now, it is easy to see, that this is mere adulation, and not reasoning: to prove the superiority of the Abbé Jamet's pupils, it would be necessary to shew, not that their replies are rapid and precise, but that they are more so than those of the pupils of any other teacher. M. Lamouroux may, perhaps, have been a well meaning man; but it is clear, even from his brief "Notice," of thirty-two pages, that logic was not his forte.

The establishment, or institution of *Le Bon Sauveur* was founded about the year 1720, by Mademoiselle Le Roy, a young lady of Caen. The nuns of the Visitation having rendered themselves utterly useless to the world, and defeated the intention of their pious and humane founder, St François de Sales, by cloistering themselves, Mademoiselle Le Roy conceived the design of creating a new community in their stead. The foundress, who was young and rich, possessed a house at Vancelles, where the new society, which at first consisted of only five members, first resided. In 1734, they obtained the royal letters patent, constituting them a regular religious community, under the name of "Daughters of the Good Saviour;" and went on increasing in numbers and utility, until the breaking out of the Revolution, which, confounding their institution with others of similar name, broke up their establishment, and turned the sisterhood adrift upon the world. Genuine piety and virtue, however, are

* *Notice sur le Bon Sauveur*, &c. p. 15.

not to be subdued: these excellent women, whose utility was apparent, were permitted by the authorities of the day to exercise their pious duties, though in a manner more humble and obscure than at present. They had from the commencement had a certain number of lunatics under their care, and with these, then about twenty in number, they retired to the village of Mondeville, where they continued until the year 1799, when they returned to Caen. In 1804, the house was purchased in which they now dwell, and where they have increased from sixteen to one hundred and twenty-five.*

Among the important establishments of Caen the Medical School is undoubtedly to be reckoned. This place I visited, in company with Mr Swift, an Irish surgeon, and an acquaintance of M. Ameline, the principal lecturer. The lecture, on the day of my visit, happened to be *περι της γενεσεως*, but was rather the continuation of a former discourse than a complete view of the subject: neither did the lecturer enter into any profound investigation, or exhibit any peculiar theory, confining himself strictly to plain matters within the comprehension of every one. The *subject* upon which he demonstrated was a male infant two or three days old, then almost in a state of putrefaction, and consequently emitting a smell by no means agreeable to the nostrils. As the professor had very politely given me a chair close by his side, I lost not a breath of the odour of the corpse, which appeared to be somewhat too strong even for the well seasoned noses of the students, who stood as far as they conveniently could from the centre of attraction. For my own part, I now and then refreshed my eyes by turning them away from the dead body to the waves of the Odon, which ran through fresh green meadows under the window. Though the odour of

* *Notice sur le Bon Sauvcur, &c.* p. 28—30.

corpses may be disagreeable, however, it cannot be very prejudicial to health; for I have observed, that medical students in general, whether in England or on the Continent, have fine ruddy complexions, indicative of the most robust health. This was particularly the case with those now before me, as well as with the professor himself; who, though upwards of seventy, was a hale, strong man, in countenance somewhat resembling Mr Abernethy. His manner of lecturing was extremely good: his delivery was clear and distinct, and his arrangement methodical. When the lecture was over, I noticed a trait of that insensibility which is engendered by this sort of study. Somebody having observed, that the surgeon of the hospital had promised them a *subject*, one of the students inquired, why it was not sent for at once; "Oh!" replied the other, laughing, "*it is not dead yet!*" Every body laughed, and thought it a good joke; and I, such is the force of example, laughed with the rest. The thing viewed in another light, was horrible: at a short distance from us was a fellow-creature in the agonies of death, contemplating with awful uncertainty the complexion of the future, and trembling, perhaps, at the thought of approaching the dread tribunal of his Creator. Far from sympathizing as we ought with this suffering mortal, we were impatient for his body; and, in the ardour of science, had already stripped him of the attributes of sex, and spoke of him as if already reduced to the inanimate state. The lecture-room was not, like those of London, in the theatral form, but a mere plain apartment, where the students, about thirty or forty in number, crowd round the demonstrator, and get a peep at his operations as well as they can.

From the lecture-room, we proceeded to the museum, containing the artificial skeletons,* invented

* "L'idée de cette espèce de plastique anatomique, par la superstration des parties," say MM. Portal and Percy, "n'est

by M. Ameline, to examine which, formed the object of my visit. The detached and smaller pieces of artificial anatomy, if such a term be allowable, were enclosed in glass cases; and the complete skeletons, or *mannikins*, as they are termed by the inventor, were standing here and there about the apartment, like so many statues of St Bartholomew. The mannikin, which, having been shewn in London to the most distinguished members of the profession, is of course known in some measure to the public in England, exactly represents a human body, from which the epidermis has been removed. The muscles, the ligaments, the tendons, the veins, the arteries, and the nerves, all constructed artificially, are built up, as it were, into a man upon the frame-work afforded by nature, the bones being those of a real skeleton.

When we had sufficiently examined the external form of the mannikin, the professor brought forth another figure, which was laid upon the table, as if for dissection. He then removed the covering of the abdominal cavity, and, taking away piece after piece, suceessively bared before us the various mysteries of the internal structure of man; the eye passing, as veil after veil was lifted, from the digestive to the vital organs, from the stomach to the lungs and the brain. When the breast was opened, a large void

pas nouvelle. On la trouve dans plusieurs livres du seizième et du dix-septième siècles, où des planches gravées, posées les unes sur les autres, laissent voir, en les soulevant chacune à son tour, tantôt l'intérieur de la poitrine, tantôt celui du bas-ventre, ainsi du reste. On est allé long-temps visiter, dans le cabinet de la demoiselle Beiron, rue Saint-Jacques, à Paris, de ces cadavres factices qu'elle fabriquait elle-même, en cire colorée, et dans lesquels les organes internes étaient rendus visibles, en découvrant la cavité qui les recélait. Mais," they add, "M. Ameline a surpassé tout ce qu'on a pu faire et tenter dans ce genre, et on ne saurait même, sans injustice, lui contester le titre d'inventeur."

appeared in the middle. "Ah!" said the professor, "the heart is wanting! I will supply the deficiency immediately;" and going to the magazine, where hearts and heads were lying about in profusion, he took up the important part, and forthwith fixed it in its place. When this was done, he caused me to remark the aid afforded by his invention in explaining the doctrine of the circulation of the blood: the right ventricle, containing the blood which had made the tour of the whole system, and lost its colour by the way, was black; while the left, filled with the fluid, which had regained its rosy hue by coming in contact with the external air, was of a bright red colour. The female figure is in many respects ingeniously constructed; but, upon the whole, it appears to me to be less perfect than the male.

I cannot, of course, pretend to have an opinion respecting the utility of M. Ameline's invention to medical students; and, therefore, I borrow that of the physicians, Portal and Percy, which has been sanctioned by the Institute of Paris. "The mannikin of M. Ameline," say they, "possesses advantages, which, though less considerable than its inventor imagines, are not, therefore, the less real, or the less praiseworthy. We are convinced, that unprofessional persons, who might be disgusted by the sight and smell of a corpse, may acquire, by the help of this ingenious contrivance, a certain degree of anatomical knowledge, without in the least shocking their sensibility. Nay, we will go yet farther, and confess, that even an anatomical student, in default of all other resources, might, by this means, commence his studies, familiarize himself with the names, the divisions, and descriptive notions of the science, by handling the different pieces, each of which bears a distinctive number, by examining them together, by separating them the one from the other, and by restoring them successively to their respective places. Indeed, the

man who has completed his studies, may occasionally be reminded, by an image of this kind, of certain details which may have escaped his memory: But we cannot, for a moment, admit that it should be considered of paramount importance as a means of instruction, or that it is possible to become an anatomist by the aid of this phantom of anatomy: and, on this point, we need only appeal to the knowledge and candour of M. Ameline himself, who, on more than one occasion, has professed the same opinion.”*

But, of all the countries in the world, France appears to be the one where it is least necessary to have recourse to artificial pieces of anatomy, for dead bodies are here so easily procured, that, like the mummies of Egypt, they are made an article of commerce, and sent off in ship loads to England. At Caen, every person who dies at the Bicêtre, or in the Hospital, unless claimed by the surviving relations, is given to the surgeons for dissection, and the young medical students go in a body to escort the *subject* from the prison, or the ward, to the dissecting-room, walking by the side of the cart like a military guard. The number of bodies thus obtained, amount, annually, to about a hundred. Even those bodies which are said to be buried are not unfrequently abstracted from the coffin, while a few stones are put in instead; after which the priest walks and chants as if it were a real corpse. The lady abbess at the hospital winks at these doings. The other day, a deformed person, who had died there, was ordered, in conformity with the wishes of his friends, to be deposited in the earth; but the surgeon, an amateur in these matters, was perfectly shocked at the bare idea, and exclaimed, “Ah, ma foi! that little fellow must not be interred; he is quite a curiosity!” The old lady, who must ere long become a *subject* herself, and may, perhaps,

* *Copie du Rapport fait à l'Institut, le 19 Octobre, 1819.*

be reckoned a curiosity by the surgeon of the day, demurred, nodded assent, and the little hunchback was forthwith uncoffined, and transferred to the dissecting-room.

The priests, who regard the cemeteries as in some measure their own domains, and are unwilling to confess at how little their power is valued by their flocks, pretend that the dead here run but little risk of being disturbed by the resurrection men; but a very old resident at Caen, who possessed ample means of acquiring information, has assured me that nothing is more common. I imagine the laws had an eye to the resurrection men when they ordained, that all persons should be interred, under a heavy penalty, within twenty-four hours after death. The law-givers were anxious that science should have them fresh and fresh; though, of course, the health of the survivors is the pretence.

Many of the English, who have the misfortune to lose friends in France, being aware of the small respect in which the grave is held there, contrive to have their remains conveyed over to their own country; and the methods to which they have recourse are various. A lady, whose child died at Caen, caused the body to be packed up as plate, got it passed, I know not how, through the customhouse, and put on board the steam packet for England. She herself sat by it upon deck all the way over, suppressing her tears, lest the sailors should suspect the truth, and, in their superstitious terror of a corpse, throw her treasure overboard. An English gentleman, whose friend died last year in Normandy, buried a quantity of stones in a coffin, in order, apparently, to comply with the law, but had the body embalmed, and put into a chest, in which it lay for several months, in a merchant's cellar, before an opportunity of shipping it for England occurred.

CHAPTER XI.

National Character and Manners—Difficulty of the Study of Manners—False Ideas of Refinement and Politeness—Absurd Reasoning of Buffon—His Practice in conformity with it—French Vanity—The French a dull People—Their Humanity—Treatment of Infants—New-born Children under the Protection of the Virgin—Normans Unmusical—Beggars—Passion for Hair—Costume—Distinction of Rank.

IN all countries, the things which most pertinaciously elude the observation of a traveller, are the national character, and the manners of the people. I am aware, moreover, that a traveller, in performing this part of his task, is exceedingly liable to be warped by prejudice; he *must* condemn those customs and practices which differ from his own, or confess with Ovid, —

“ ————— Video meliora proboque,
Deteriora sequor ;”

which very few persons are disposed to do. It seems, however, to be a mistake to suppose, that, for the comprehending of the manners of a people, a very long residence among them is absolutely necessary. All that is requisite, is, to stay until the gloss of novelty be worn away from the people in the eyes of the traveller, and from the traveller in the eyes of the people; after which a careful observer will judge as correctly from the observations of one year as from those of twenty years. Mankind, in general, are too

monstrous and commonplace to require to be profoundly studied. Their good qualities and their failings lie quite upon the surface; and it is only in the presence of a man who, by some strangeness or peculiarity in his own manners, reminds them that they are observed, that they conceal their foibles and habitual absurdities. I have always judged it best, when among foreigners, to appear, as far as possible, to be one of themselves, by adopting for the time their habits, their notions, their whims, nay, even their prejudices, and by referring as little as they would allow me to England, or to English manners. Nor, in order to do this, is there any necessity for a man to compromise himself or his country either. If you never thrust your country in a foreigner's face, as it were, he will soon become tired, unless he be a graceless beast indeed, of disparaging it, especially if you take care to make it understood, that, as you never rail at his country, you expect him to respect yours.

The first thing which commands the attention of a stranger in a foreign country, is the manner in which he himself is received by the inhabitants; but, as the degree of civility he experiences depends almost always as much upon himself as upon them, nothing can be more irrational than to draw any definitive conclusion from this circumstance. The same people who will receive a polite man politely, will be rude towards a boor, and insolent to a coxcomb. Foreigners have passions as well as we; and if, confiding in our character of strangers, we endeavour to lord it over them in their own country, as Englishmen, who never could be guilty of so mean a piece of rudeness at home, sometimes do, it is very natural that they should resent it in the same way.

If I might infer the character of the Normans from the treatment I myself have generally experienced, I should say that they are kindness itself; because I have scarcely experienced any thing else at their

hands. But the fact is, that one instinctively shuns the disagreeable, the rude, the selfish, the unprincipled, who must, nevertheless, be taken into the account, when a general opinion of the character of a people is to be formed. All nations have, at bottom, an overweening opinion of themselves; but they conceal it in proportion to the progress they have made in refinement; as individuals, in general, are less egotistical in proportion to their philosophy and intellect. The Normans are not a refined people. They are brave, clever, good-natured, and hospitable; but excessively boastful, conceited, vain, and unthinking. They entertain you with their superior politeness, and urbanity, and all that; not perceiving, that, by doing so, they are committing the grossest possible breach of politeness. I consider them among the least polite of European nations. They are absolutely incapable of concealing for a moment the ridiculous vanity which causes them to regard themselves as the most refined and civilized of mankind. What should we think of the refinement of an individual who should be continually repeating to every person he met in society — “I am more refined, more polite, more civilized than you!” Yet, this is what the French never fail to do, whether in season or out of season, in a tête-à-tête or in company. I have frequently heard some of the persons whom I most esteem in Normandy remark, — “You English are perfectly incapable of that delicate politeness towards the ladies for which *we* are distinguished. Your gallantry is the gallantry of elephants!” Yet, when their backs were turned, their own countrywomen would laugh at these *polished* gallants, call them “vilains singes,” and make a pantomimic exhibition of their gestures and grimaces.

For my own part, since it was my business to *observe*, not to *reform* the people with whom I lived, I never attempted to check any ebullition of national or personal vanity. Whether they dwelt upon the

praises of France, or the dispraise of England, it was all one to me : I only repeated to myself,—

“ A chiel’s amang ye takin’ notes,
An’ faith he’ll prent it ! ”

It was my business to make them feel perfectly at their ease, when I was among them, which they never could have been if I had opposed my own nationality to their nationality, and perpetually irritated them by opposition. I do not believe, however, that the French, generally, soon comprehend what is meant by the word “ refinement,” at least, in the sense in which it is understood by philosophers. To be refined, in this sense, is to possess the art of making every person, however inferior to you in rank, manners, or intellect, perfectly at his ease in your company ; never, while the individual conducts himself to the best of his ability, to cause him to feel his inferiority ; and, at the same time, to conceal entirely that your condescension costs you an effort. If this be the right view of the thing, the French do not understand what is meant by politeness ; for, from the highest to the lowest, they are all possessed by the rage of extolling themselves, their literature, their country, their manners, at the expense of those of their neighbours. I do not now allude merely to those portions of the population which I have had an opportunity of contemplating in society. The same spirit pervades the literary and scientific men, and even those who, by the complaisance of mankind, have been denominated “ philosophers.”

It is pardonable, even in a philosopher, to nourish a preference for his own countrymen, since they must, in general, resemble himself in more points than any other people can ; but, if this preference lead him, in spite of experience and evidence, to think or to say that the little cluster of human

beings, to which he happens more particularly to belong, is superior to all other men, it then justly exposes him to contempt and derision. Buffon, a man who was once regarded as a philosopher, and is still considered one of the most distinguished writers of France, having given an imperfect definition of man, and found that this imperfect definition agreed pretty well with the character of his countrymen, jumps at once to the conclusion, that the Frenchman is the first of human beings. "Si l'homme," says he, "est un animal sociable, le François est plus homme qu'un autre." By giving another definition, not more imperfect than the above, the Frenchman might be proved not to be a man at all: "Man is a religious animal; but the Frenchman has no religion: ergo, the Frenchman forms no part of our species." This mock reasoning is of course absurd, though not one jot more so than that of the celebrated naturalist, who seems to have lived among four-footed animals, until he had forgotten the mode of appreciating man. According to Hobbes, a sophist of more genius than Buffon, the Frenchman would stand but a very bad chance of being included among mankind, for our leviathan defines man to be an *unsociable animal*. The same vain and unworthy prejudice which caused Buffon to imagine his countrymen superior in character and beauty to the other inhabitants of the earth, induced him to accuse the Englishman of deficiency in politeness, and of being coarse and indelicate in his pleasures. Yet Buffon, notwithstanding his distinguished literary abilities, was himself a gross and grovelling voluptuary, both in theory and practice;* a man who envied the inferior

* For his theoretica view of the matter, take his own words : — "Amour ! pourquoi fais-tu l'état heureux de tous les êtres et le malheur de l'homme ? *C'est qu'il n'y a que le physique de cette passion que soit bon ; c'est que, malgré ce que peuvent dire*

animals their sensual enjoyments, and in the conduct of his affections was very little superior to the vilest of them.

In his mode of estimating foreigners, Buffon was a faithful representative of his countrymen. The same spirit still pervades them, and breaks forth daily in their conversation, in their newspapers, and in their books. They are the "*grande nation*"—men *par excellence*—the most philosophical, the most literary, the most polished of mankind. But who says so? Not one soul on earth but themselves. At the same time, this most gross and insolent vanity, which sometimes provokes one to disparage them beyond their deserts, must not make us blind to their genuine merits. France has produced great men of every kind,—great writers, great artists, great statesmen, great generals. Her literature is rich, varied, and original; her history is filled with examples of heroic courage, and patriotism, and virtue; and at this moment a pure and enlightened love of liberty is cherished by a vast proportion of the people. It is true, as I have already observed, that they are but too apt to dwell upon their own merits, and disparage those of other nations; but this cannot obliterate, though it may stain, their glory.

I am very far from supposing, that the mere fact of passing the sea, and living for a certain time among

les gens épris, le moral n'en vaut rien." This is precisely the theory a horse would form of love, if a horse could theorize. His practice was corresponding. He paid no regard to decency or to the feelings of his amiable and affectionate wife. See "*Voyage à Montbar, par Herault de Sechelles*," a young man of wild notions, but undoubted genius, cut off by the Revolution. This little book, now extremely scarce, contains the best account any where to be found of Buffon; and, although the author's opinions of the naturalist were much too favourable, the reader will do better to consult it than any other work extant on the same subject.

a foreign people, entitles me to suppose myself an infallible judge of their character and manners. I give my observations for what they are,—the fruit of nine months' study. Perhaps a longer residence might improve my opinion, perhaps deteriorate it. At all events, it is given in love, not in anger; for though I cannot, with the usual blindness of affection, shut my eyes to their failings, I have a singular predilection for the French, which has increased in proportion as I have become better acquainted with them.

Self-knowledge has in all ages been regarded as a thing of most difficult acquirement, as well for nations as for individuals. If they would understand exactly what their own character is, they must contemplate themselves as they are reflected in the opinions of other nations, as men view their own faces in a mirror. I begin to appreciate England better since I have viewed it, as it were, from a distance, and regarded its image in the opinions of the nations which surround it; and I make no doubt that the French might, if they pleased, correct their ideas respecting themselves by examining the notions which other people entertain of them.

Sterne remarked, many years ago, that the French were a grave people; but his opinion, being contrary to that vulgarly received, was laughed at, and regarded as a mere paradox. Since his time, however, many other writers have hazarded the same opinion; and, therefore, although my ideas on this subject are not new, they will not now be esteemed paradoxical. The French, in my opinion, are not only a grave, but a dull people; and all the arguments brought forward in support of the contrary, appear to me to range themselves naturally in support of this view of the matter. It is said, that wits make their fortune in this country by uttering *bon mots*, and making people laugh. I grant it. What then? Did Whittington

become " thrice Lord Mayor of London " by carrying cats to a country overstocked with cats ? It is precisely because wit is a scarce article in France, that it is so highly valued. In Blindman's kingdom, as the old apophthegm says, blinkers wear crowns. The Abbé Franquelot, as far back as the reign of Louis XIV, found the Parisians so dull, that he declared he never laughed at Paris, unless when he happened to meet with a person from Caen.* Every thing else favours this view of the French character. Observe the long speeches in their tragedies ; the vast compilations which they undertake and accomplish ; the patience with which they encounter and overcome the mortal ennui of oriental languages ; their exact and laborious translations ; their admiration of Sir Charles Grandison, and Clarissa Harlowe. It is among a heavy, plodding, industrious people, like the French, that a jester is best received. Lively, mercurial natures, have no need of the labours of such a person to amuse them : the *αρχὴ τῆς ζωῆς* is within them ; they are kept awake by the activity of their own thoughts. But the French are sociable, fond of society, &c. Exactly. They feel themselves dull, and want to be amused, and flock together, in order to produce an artificial excitement, as people do to keep themselves warm in winter. They put me very strongly in mind of the Demos of Aristophanes, that singular little old man, who, from sheer ennui, could never rest quiet in his own house, but would be ever abroad, or at the tribunals, hearing and judging causes.

I would by no means be thought to mean by this, that the French are a melancholy people. Quite the contrary. They are never really melancholy ; and,

* *Œuvres diverses de Segrais*, tome I, p. 205. The Caënnais are still remarkable for their jollity and mirthfulness upon certain occasions.

when they imagine themselves so, it is merely for the sake of variety, and "*pour passer le temps.*" The Greeks, the merriest people upon earth, were, according to Aristotle, exceedingly liable to fits of melancholy, which is nothing but the low ebb of animal spirits which succeeds a too copious overflow; but I have never heard that the Dutch are given to melancholy.

We every day hear it observed, by people who, like parrots, repeat what they have heard, and nothing more, that, while two or three Englishmen will sit in a stage-coach for hours without uttering a word, the same number of Frenchmen, under the same circumstances, will have poured forth volumes of frivolity. But this is mere nonsense. The French are as often sulky as other people; and I have known several of them travel together for leagues without speaking. Indeed, when I have entered the diligence with a party of them, I have generally been obliged to set the conversation agoing myself, so little disposed have they shewn themselves to begin, though, when their tongues are once put in motion, they move on glibly enough. With respect to their frivolity, I can say but little, as I have seldom found them guilty of it. They are generally, on the contrary, more solid than ourselves; more disposed to reason—to argue—to dispute. No doubt the Revolution may have done much to produce this change; but I suspect the groundwork of what they now are, was always in their character.

On another point of the French character, an absurd opinion very generally prevails in England. Reasoning from the horrors which took place during the Revolution, when the whole nation was thrown into a violent paroxysm of rage, we are apt to regard the French as a people eminently cruel and ferocious, and repeat the absurd saying of Voltaire, that they are half-monkey half-tiger in their natures. The French,

however, are neither monkeys nor tigers, but a very sober-minded, laborious, kind, hospitable, and humane people; uniting, indeed, some contradictions in their character, but never verging, I think, to habitual cruelty. With regard to the vanity of which I accuse them, it should be remarked, that it is national vanity; for of personal vanity I do not consider them a jot more guilty than other people. I have already, more than once, remarked, that they are singularly coarse in their manners, and have alluded to some practices which prevail among them in support of my assertion; and there are many examples of this want of refinement, which would be scarcely comprehensible in England; but to be profuse in these might disgust some readers, and could prove neither very pleasing nor instructive to any.

I shall here throw together a few observations on their manners without attempting either much order or connection, as I cannot discover any link by which they could be bound together into a whole.

It is according to etiquette in France for ladies *enceintes* to be ill at least a month or two previous to their confinement; during all which time, their families are kept in a state of perpetual inquietude and alarm on their account. No sooner is the miniature integer of "la grande nation" born, than it is immediately whipt into a tiny *tricot*, or elastic flannel waistcoat; next has woollen stockings pulled upon his, or her, legs; and, lastly, is swathed up, like a little mummy, from head to foot, until it is impossible it should move a limb. Other flannel garments are then wrapped about it; but no *long-clothes*, as they are called in England, are ever worn. The *sages-femmes* have no signs, I believe, over their doors in England; but in Normandy, these "cunning women" adorn the fronts of their houses with pictures, representing their own fair persons, holding a new-born infant in their arms.

Great efforts have been made, by several celebrated writers, and more especially by Rousseau and Buffon, to banish from France the absurd practice of swathing infants, and the still more unnatural custom of employing hired wet-nurses; and the Count de Lacedépède, taking the will for the deed, informs us, with great simplicity, that it is to the two above mentioned writers that the honour of having abolished these customs is due. The fashion of making live mummies, however, still prevails in Normandy: and I have been informed by an accoucheur, who has practised in various parts of France, that it is equally prevalent in other provinces of the kingdom. With regard to the employing of wet-nurses, nothing can be more common, even among the middling classes of the people. A child may here be put out at twelve francs per month. In the selection of a wet-nurse, the higher classes are very particular, generally requiring that she shall have brown hair, and a certain cast of features.

Another article in the French mode of treating new-born infants is very extraordinary: the *sage-femme*, or nurse, never washes the head, but, having wiped it dry, leaves it in that state, accumulating dust and dirt, until it is covered with a crust an inch thick. This is supposed to keep the brain warm and comfortable, and to preserve the soul from being disarranged in her movements by rheums and catarrhs. It is, moreover, said to have the effect of keeping the hair soft and silky,—an important consideration among a people who, like the ancient Spartans, have always been noted for their attention to their tresses. Another advantage, still more important than any of the foregoing, is, that it prevents the destruction of numerous living creatures, which, as Sir Hugh Evans observes, “are familiar beasts to man, and signify love.” It would be in keeping with this humane practice, to go bare-

footed, like the Hindoo fakeers, to avoid, as far as possible, the killing of other harmless insects, which, though less "familiar beasts," are equally useful in their way.

Among the superstitious notions which still maintain their ground in Normandy, there is one, connected with the treatment of children, which will never, I hope, be put to flight by modern philosophy, unless it be able to replace it by common sense: it is believed that the Virgin Mary sweetens the food of infants,—a notion which saves sugar, and prevents the stomach of children from being overloaded with sweets. As the child grows up, however, the Virgin ceases to interfere with its victuals, which is remarkably judicious.

An illustration of another trait of superstition occurred the other day at Cormelles. A woman, who had a son about to draw for the conscription, had likewise a favourite hen. A few days before the drawing took place, this foolish fowl, heedless or ignorant of her fate, conceived the monstrous idea of unsexing herself, like Lady Macbeth, and imitating the voice and manner of honest chanticleer, her husband, which the poor woman took to be a bad omen; and hoping, by the destruction of the prophet, to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecy, she cut off the noisy animal's head.

Another trait in the character of the Normans is, that they are very little addicted to music. Walk through the villages, or the fields, at what hour you please, you will seldom or never hear the voice of man or woman singing, or, if you do, it would, in general, be as pleasant to listen to the croaking of a raven as to them. I have never heard the voice of woman so unmusical as it is here. Even in the churches the singing is so bad, that, during the evening service in Lent, many persons stay away from church until it is over. The hurdy-gurdy may some-

times be heard in the streets of Caen ; for Colonel Tod says he has listened to it there, until he has imagined himself in Mewar, where the same delicious attempts at music are made. I am not sure, however, that I have ever been charmed with the sounds of this celestial Norman instrument, or with those of any other, except a squeaking fiddle and noisy drum. There are, of course, among the young ladies and gentlemen, individuals who sing and play, and have really acquired a taste for music ; but I am now speaking of the aptitude and natural bent of the people, which, as far as I have observed, is decidedly unmusical.

In England half your beggars make their approaches to your compassion with music, but here it is with religious cant. During the fair of Caen, the roads in the vicinity of the city were taken possession of by troops of miserable wretches of both sexes, who bawled out without intermission,—“ Respectable Christians, bestow one liard upon me, for the love of God !” The male beggars are in general the most atrocious looking ruffians I ever beheld ; and in the villages in the neighbourhood of Caen, these gloomy banditti, whom I take to be for the most part robbers in disguise, actually besiege the genteeler part of the houses, knocking or kicking at the doors, and bawling out, in a kind of menacing drawl,—“ Charité, s’il vous plait,” until you give them something, or send them to Jerico. I am rather pleased than otherwise to see a peaceable beggar, and could sympathize with Charles Lamb, when he lamented the decay of mendicinity in England ; but these ruffians only inspire me with disgust, and if I ever give them any thing, I am exceedingly apprehensive it cannot be put down to the score of my benevolence. Their appearance in the roads and in the streets puts one in mind of what an ancient historian of France relates of Charles the Bold, who having, as he observes, adopted the

dress of the Greeks of those times, looked so absurd and fantastical, that he frightened the very dogs, which dropped their tails and howled fearfully as they saw him pass.*

Orderic Vital, who, although an Englishman, is the best of the old historians of Normandy, observes, that the ancient Normans, like all other nations of Celtic origin, were remarkably proud of their hair; and two practices, which still prevail among this people, may perhaps be regarded as a relic of the old passion. In the first place, the women, who turn the front hair back, and conceal it beneath their caps, wear immense masses of false hair upon the back part of the head. The men, on the contrary, comb down their hair over the forehead, and look, to an Englishman, like so many methodist preachers, which detracts considerably from the dignity of their countenance, and sometimes gives them a sullen and ferocious look, which is any thing but natural.

To add to the meanness of their appearance, by far the greater number of the male population of Caen wear, instead of hats, little, low, sneaking caps, like those of schoolboys. It is possible that the mode in which we cover the head may have some effect upon the character of the mind. The Greeks, except in time of war, went, for the most part, bare-headed, as did likewise the Egyptians; while the Persians, who were never distinguished for intellect, wore thick, heavy turbans, or mitres, which kept their heads warm, and perhaps prevented the brain, as they certainly did the skull, from attaining its proper consistency. Hats, though ugly enough, are the coolest coverings that could be chosen for the head, as they always preserve a quantity of air upon the crown unheated by the sun in summer, and not

* *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, tome vi. Dissertation of the Abbé Vertot.

too much cooled in winter. To improve upon this, there are some persons who bore small holes in the crown and sides of their hats, for the purpose of letting in fresh air; and certainly, whether on this account or not, the hair of those persons is beautiful; and they are never troubled with headaches. Children who go much bareheaded, and are not allowed to sleep in nightcaps, have very seldom the headache; while others, who sleep with the head warm, have coarser hair, and a frequently throbbing forehead. Here every body's head is wrapped up, or covered; the men's with warm cloth caps, the women's with handkerchiefs or bonnets, and the children's with thick woollen nightcaps, or with handkerchiefs, like the women's, twisted about the head in the form of a turban. A great number of women of the lower orders wear a sort of Phrygian bonnet, or cap of liberty, which, when fabricated of stiff materials, resembles not a little the "*Hennius*" of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, against which the honest Carmelite, Thomas Concite, of Brittany, carried on a species of crusade.*

The ladies of Normandy wear whatever bonnets or hats happen to be in fashion at Paris, but the female citizens of a certain rank wear nothing but caps. This renders it necessary for every person to be armed against sudden showers with an umbrella, which, in most instances, is of a fiery red, or some other bright colour. These umbrellas are of a clumsy construction, and remarkably heavy. I think an English umbrella manufacturer, who should set up at Caen, and be moderate in his charges, would very soon make a fortune, as might also almost any other manufacturer of articles of utility. Besides the coverings for the head mentioned above, there is

* The reader will find some curious particulars concerning the dress of the women of the Bocage in the Appendix, No. II.

another, still more remarkable, perhaps, peculiar to the female peasantry; this is a monstrously high cap, made upon a *shape* like a bonnet, and kept upon the head by a piece of black ribbon, which, passing under the chin, like the strap of a soldier's helmet, is pinned to the cap on each side. Notwithstanding the masculine air which this cap, with its military appendage, gives the face, the peasant girls never look so well as when they have it on, especially when, as on Sundays, the long lapels, depending from the lofty crown on each side, are trimmed with rich lace, which is here worn by the meanest of the people.

From these remarks on the costumes of the people, the reader will be able to discover that, from some cause or another, the distinctions of rank are still assiduously kept up in this part of France. A very striking illustration of this fact occurred at a public concert, given last winter at Caen, for the benefit of the poor, where the performers, with two or three exceptions, were amateurs. Some time after the audience had been seated, and the singing had commenced, some eight or nine persons, belonging to the ancient and noble families of the country, arrived, and the whole house was immediately thrown into confusion, the company being requested to get up, and yield the front seats to their betters. All grumbled, some hissed, others sneered at their parchment titles to nobility,—but the greater number made way for them. Two or three, however, of the honest and sturdy citizens of Caen, refused to get up or stir an inch, very properly observing, that, as all paid alike, no distinction should be made, and that, for their part, they did not care a straw for the nobility. The titled part of the audience was put out of temper by this circumstance, and, instead of listening to the music, sat down in dogged silence, brooding over the insult which had been offered them; and it was long before they recovered their composure. It is the feel-

ing produced by such vulgar affectations of superiority, which tends as much as any thing to destroy the ancient governments of Europe, and to render the aristocracy, the legitimate supporters of the throne, detested and detestable.

Most persons who have written on the costume of the French, have noticed the short petticoats of the women, which it is generally, and perhaps justly, supposed are worn by their fair owners in order that they may show their pretty feet and ankles. There seems, however, to be another cause for this fashion, which is the extraordinary filthiness of the streets, arising at once from the total absence of pavements, and the slovenliness and heedlessness of the people. The short, mincing gait, and the stoop observable in the generality of French ladies, and which it was once fashionable to imitate in England, may likewise be traced to the necessity of picking their way carefully through streets crossed by a hundred little canals, and dotted by innumerable heaps of mud.

CHAPTER XII.

Excursion to Bayeux—Name and Origin of the City—Habit of Walking in the Middle of the Road—Absence of Foot Pavements—Vast Drovers of Horned Cattle—Scenery—Bretteville l'Orgueilleuse—A Galley Slave—Market Place—The Cathedral—Bishop of Bayeux—Ivory Casket—Arabic Inscription—Chasuble and Stole of St Regnobert—Crypt—Tapestry of Queen Matilda—Hôtel de Ville—City Militia—Bayeux Lace—Village of Port—Scenery on the Coast—The Count de Revedin—Female Milo—Hôtel de Luxembourg—Return to Caen.

Saturday, March 20.—THOUGH by no means a convert to the opinion of Huet, which sets up Bayeux* as the capital of the Viducassi, I was still desirous of

* There seems to be no reason to doubt that this city is more ancient than Caen. Its name, according to Huet, is derived, not from *Bajocn*, as is generally supposed, but from “*Biducasses*.”—*Origines de Caen*, pp. 11, 18. Ptolemy mentions this city under the name of *Næomagus Biducassum*; but it very early lost the name of *Næomagus*, and was denominated *Civitas Bajocassium*; and from the latter of these two words have been formed *Baice*, *Bajocæ*, *Bajocum*, *Bajoga*, *Bagia*.—M. Pluquet, *Histoire de Bayeux*, p. 2. Robert-le-Roquez, in his *Miroir de l'Eternité, ou les Sept Ages du Monde*, has the following passage on the foundation of Bayeux :—

Ainsi qu'un jour il (Belus) estoit sur la mer
 Entre les flots, quasy prest d'asbymer,
 Et qu'il taschoit de se ranger à bord,
 Il vint surgir vers les parties du North
 Es environs de la Basse Neustrie,
 Où fist bastir, d'une grande industrie,
 Un fort chasteau, qui, d'ancien renom,
 De Bélocase a retenu le nom,

visiting this ancient city, beyond which the antiquarian researches of Turner and Ducarel had not extended. I was fortunate enough to be accompanied, in this little excursion, by Mr Armstrong of Caen, who, happening to have business at Bayeux, where he is almost as well known as at Caen, obligingly undertook to be my guide upon this occasion. Having provided a light cabriolet, and a good strong horse, we set off at a quarter past six in the morning. Even at that early hour the shops of Caen were all open, and the streets as full and busy as at twelve o'clock in the day. Whenever this is the case, it is a nice task to ride or drive through the streets, as every body walks in the middle of the road, and would rather run the risk of being trampled to death, than take the trouble to look round, or walk on the *trottoir*.* The aversion of the Normans for the trottoir may be traced to two causes. In the first place, it was formerly the custom for tradesmen of every description to expose their wares outside of their doors, so as to render the trottoir impassable; and although their passion for turning their shops inside out has lately been restrained by an order of police, the practice still continues in sufficient vigour to impede and annoy foot passengers. In the next place, it is the fashion to empty the contents of vessels of every description into the streets from the upper stories, even by day, as also to spit occasionally; and I myself, being addicted, after the manner of Englishmen, to prefer the trottoir to the road, have had the honour of having dirty water thrown upon my head by some fair inhabitant of Caen. The absence of foot pave-

Où de Bayeux est la ville fondée,
 Pour le jour d'hui fort bien accomodée :
 Car Bélocase, en termes resolués,
 Nous signifie la maison de Bélus.

* I use this word, for want of a better, to signify the part of the street where the pavement should be.

ments, in all French towns, seems to be a relic of the old despotism, under which it was not thought worth while to do any thing for the people's accommodation; and the noblesse, who generally went abroad in carriages or on horseback, cared little about the filthiness and inconvenience of the streets. Even at this moment genteel people, especially women, hate walking, though they cannot afford to ride; and, therefore, when there is the least danger of bad weather, the streets are seldom enlivened by the appearance of well dressed persons: yet there are exceedingly few carriages or saddle horses. As soon as the people are properly estimated, there will be foot pavements, and more cleanliness; for I cannot believe for a moment that the French are dirty from preference. To return, however, from this digression: Our movements were farther impeded by vast droves of cattle, which were passing through the city on their way to Rouen, and which, for the most part, had as little flesh on their bones as the representatives of famine which Pharaoh saw in his dream. Even when we had left the city behind us, and entered the country, the road was still covered, at short intervals, by these half famished animals, which, had they been at all carnivorous, would certainly have devoured both us and our charger. The morning was cold, and the sky overcast with clouds, so that the landscape, which, even in summer, would be far from brilliant or picturesque, appeared to be poor and monotonous in the extreme. Vast plains, interspersed with a few elevations, separated from each other by long sweeps, or hollows, such as occur in the steppes of Tartary, and thinly dotted with gray leafless trees, form but a poor picture; yet, when dressed in the light of the morning, and viewed with an enthusiastic eye, even such a country has charms. At length a brisk west wind, which blew directly in our faces, rolled back the clouds, and enabled us to enjoy the bright blue

sky ; and, presently, the sun shed new life upon the scene, and brought out, into bold relief, the numerous villages and farms with which the country round is thickly sprinkled. Having passed through Bretteville l'Orgueilleuse, a clean neat village, remarkable for the handsome spire of its church, we entered upon a more picturesque and thickly wooded country, which continued improving all the way to Bayeux. On both sides of the way, several respectable and some handsome chateaux, or gentlemen's villas, were visible among the trees, which must, I imagine, conceal them entirely when in full leaf. In the garden of one of these villas, which happened to be very near the road, we observed two earthenware lions, placed there, I imagine, to terrify robbers, for they were a little too ugly to be regarded as ornaments. It was, I think, in the neighbourhood of this lion-guarded chateau, that we met two fierce-looking gendarmes, mounted on strong horses, and armed cap-à-piè, one of whom was leading, in chains, a man on foot, who, whatever were his offences, had certainly the air of a ruffian broke loose from the galleys. His physiognomy, of which one could catch the meaning at a glance, was most sinister. The face was not ugly, nor was it fierce or scowling ; but there was an expression of calm contented villainy, which seemed perfectly natural. I imagine that Passamonte, in *Don Quixotte*, or Don Raphael, in *Gil Blas*, may have been of this man's family.

Upon arriving at Bayeux, we drove up to the Hôtel de Luxembourg, the principal inn ; and having put our Rosinante into the stable, sallied forth to see the market, while breakfast was preparing. In passing through the town, we observed near the river one of the public *latrinæ*, with two doors, over one of which an inscription was placed signifying that it was for women ; while the other was for men. They were close to each other. The market is held in a large

open space,* surrounded on all sides by houses, and ornamented on two sides by a double row of elm trees. Here were assembled an immense number of peasants from the surrounding country, whose costume, more especially that of the women, would furnish rich materials to a painter. I was disappointed, however, at finding so few pretty faces among the country girls, though there were one or two stars in the crowd. The meat, fowls, fish, &c. were laid out in little booths, like those in our country fairs. The price of meat here is lower than at Caen, ($4\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.) From the market, we returned to our inn, to breakfast; but, although the hotel be the first in the city, and have a very fine appellation, the breakfast was laid out with less neatness than it would have been in an ordinary public house in England. Two or three French gentlemen breakfasted at the same table, upon beefsteaks, mutton chops, cider, &c. while we had our *café au lait*, our eggs, and *veau piqué*. The bread of Bayeux seems to be good, and the butter was delicious. The finest things, however, which I saw at the hotel, were half a dozen prints, published at Vienna, representing the scenery about Salzburg and Hohenstauffen. The same rage for newspaper reading, for which our own countrymen are so remarkable, is likewise observable in the French; our companions at the breakfast table appeared to pay equal devotion to the *Constitutionnel* and to the beefsteak—now taking a mouthful of beef, and now a mouthful of politics.

As soon as the rage of hunger was appeased, we

* “La place Saint Patrice, où se tient le marché, est désignée dans les chartes des XII^{me} et XIII^{me} siècles sous le nom de *Mercatum domini Regis* : on trouve, dans les vieux titres des maisons situées en face, *les halles du Roi, nostre sire, la halle à la chair, le marché aux bêtes, le coignet aux brebis, &c.* Le marché de Bayeux se tient, de temps immémorial, le samedi, et on peut assurer que c'est un des plus beaux et des mieux fournis du département.”—PLUQUET, *Hist. de Bayeux*, p. 173.

proceeded towards the grand point of attraction at Bayeux,—the cathedral. After making our way through many a narrow and crowded street, we suddenly, on turning a corner, discovered the majestic spires of the House of God, towering to the skies. It is a building truly venerable.* Religion has breathed upon it, and made it holy. The space around on two sides is clear of buildings for a small distance, and I stepped back as far as I could, in silent delight, to allow the chastening and holy influence of the structure to descend like dew into my soul. The gray spires were so high that they seemed to be connected with heaven: the golden light of the morning was upon them, the deep blue sky above; and flights of crows, entering and issuing from the lofty pinnacles, floated backward and forward, like black specks upon the sky, while their cawings, descending from so vast a height, came like the noises of a dream upon the ear. I have seen Westminster Abbey—I have seen St Paul's; but, from some cause or another, this Norman cathedral, though far inferior to them both in dimensions and magnificence, affected me more sweetly, powerfully, religiously. My eyes were almost wet with pleasure as I gazed upon it. Architectural criticism is not my province. I enjoy the beauties of so noble a building like the meanest of the crowd; and although, if it were necessary, I might perhaps be able to explain metaphysically whence my pleasurable feelings were derived, I was content, on the present occasion, to reckon the day on which they were experienced among the *dies albi* of my life, and to allow Pleasure, as Grey says, to remain at the helm. Turning the south-western corner of the cathedral, we observe the bishop's palace, formerly the deanery, on the right hand,—a plain,

* For some discussions concerning the antiquity of the Cathedral of Bayeux, see Appendix, No. III.

small house, neat and clean, but not in good repair. From the parlour of the bishop's palace, however, you have a fine view of the church. I had been introduced to the bishop by Mr Macfarlane, curé of Cormelles, and found him a plain, pleasant gentleman, about sixty-four years of age, who had been ten years an emigrant in England, and spoke English tolerably well. He told me he had lived two years in Gower Street, and ten at Puckeridge, about thirty miles from London, on the north road; and that he had earned his livelihood, while in our country, by teaching Latin, the mathematics, &c. He appeared to retain a grateful recollection of the treatment he had received, and, I am told, takes every possible opportunity of enhancing the merit of the conduct of the English government towards the emigrants. When we came to converse of the object immediately before us, he pointed out to me the modern portion of the cathedral, that is to say, the dome, with the elegant lantern which surmounts it. This portion, though comparatively new, and therefore less valued by antiquaries, appeared to me no less beautiful than the rest of the edifice, though in a somewhat more ornate or ambitious style. The interior of the church, with its lofty, "embowed roof," numerous pillars, altars, chapels, paintings, &c. is worthy of the exterior; but I avoid describing it, as I could say nothing new. From the inscription on the tomb of Duperrier, the last bishop, I learn that the present head of the diocese is only of three years' standing, his predecessor having died in 1827.

The cicerone, a little boy about ten years old, though smart and active, was not very well acquainted with his business, for he shewed us little or nothing but what we inquired for; and, even when I did inquire about the ivory chest, said to have been taken from the Saracens by Charles Martel, he seemed to hear of it for the first time. However, by inquiring

of the sacristan, we found that it was not altogether unknown, being used at present to contain an ancient chasuble and stole, said to be older even than the chest itself, and worn by the bishop four times a-year. The chest we found to be a box, about the length of an ordinary writing desk, and about eighteen inches wide. The ivory is grown yellow with years; and the massy silver embossing is also allowed, perhaps judiciously, to retain the hue of antiquity upon it. On examining it closely, I observed that the silver was ingeniously wrought into the figure of peacocks and various other birds, and that, by some process of metallurgy, the colour of the brilliant plumage of these birds had been given it. The inscription is in Arabic, in the ancient Cufic character, and as legible as if it had been engraved yesterday. It has been put into the modern character by the Baron Von Hammer, and translated into French by the Hon. Spenser Smythe. The version given below,* however, is from the pen of M. Trébutien of

* L'inscription de la cassette orientale de Bayeux est en caractère arabe *koufique*, ou mieux *koufé*. La forme de ce caractère et le manque absolu de points diacritiques en rendent la lecture fort difficile. Aussi la première traduction qui en fut donnée par Petis-de-la-Croix, était elle purement arbitraire, et ne ressemblait en rien à l'original. La voici en caractère *neski*, avec la transcription en lettres latines :—

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم بركة كاملة و نعمة شاملة

Bismillah errahman errahîm berket kâmilel we ni'met schâmilel.

C'est-à-dire,—

“Au nom du Dieu élément et miséricordieux ! bénédiction parfaite et aisance complète,” (au propriétaire.)

Le célèbre orientaliste allemand Jos. de Hammer, à qui une copie de cette inscription avait été adressée, ayant lu, par une

Caen, a gentleman of much ability and learning, and great urbanity of manners. My own Arabic studies having been, like the adventure of the bear and fiddle in *Hudibras*, broke off in the middle, I am compelled, in this instance, to have recourse to the learning of another; but I do it with the greater pleasure, since it enables me to introduce, once more, the name of a man who deserves well of the republic of letters.

The chasuble is of blue silk, starred with white; and the stole of a species of silk and gold thread, frosted with fine pearls. From the sacristy, where these objects were shewn us, we descended to the subterranean chapel,* which is situated exactly under

erreur facile à comprendre pour ceux qui connaissent l'écriture arabe, *birrouhou* (بروة) *sa Justice*, au lieu de *berchet* (بركة) *bénédiction*, avait ainsi traduit:—"Au nom du Dieu clément et miséricordieux! sa justice est parfaite et sa grâce immense."

C'est à tort qu'on fait remonter l'origine de cette cassette aux premiers temps de la domination des Maures en Espagne, et qu'on prétend qu'elle fut trouvée dans le camp de Sarrasins après la bataille de Tours. La forme des caractères prouve qu'elle ne peut pas être antérieure aux Croisades.

* It is amusing to observe the enthusiasm of Dr Dibdin for every place and thing not visited or described by Ducarel. This crypt, which happens to be in this predicament, is denominated by our bibliographer, "one of the most curious objects in the cathedral," though it is extremely similar to that in the Abbey aux Dames, except that it is larger, and in better preservation. The Doctor throws out a shrewd suspicion that Ducarel "had a horror of crypts," and did not visit them for fear of taking cold; "but," says our bibliomaniac, "an antiquary of the true species rejoices like a bat in the damp vapours of those obscure regions." I am afraid the vapours of the "vin de Beaune" had not quite evaporated from the Doctor's head when he visited this chapel, where there are very seldom any other vapours, I believe; it being extremely airy and well lighted. Some fatality appears to attend the attempts of all travellers when they would give the exact number of any cluster of objects they examine. Burckhardt, I remember, gives the number of the pillars of the Beitullah, at Mecca, upon the authority of another person, as if

the choir, and is well lighted from the church by a large window, and two glass doors. Its roof is supported by two ranges of whitish pillars, with capitals of various patterns, like those in the crypt of the Abbey aux Dames. The roof of the chapel immediately above the altar, and as far as the nearest pillars, is a blue ground, sprinkled with stars; and on each side of the altar is a picture, that on the right representing St Paul, and the other, St Peter. In a dusky niche in the wall, on the left of the altar, is the effigies of a cardinal stretched out at full length; and above, on the roof, is a portrait of the same individual. The visage of the effigies has been defaced by violence, and the portrait by damp and time.

From the cathedral, we repaired to the place where the famous tapestry is preserved.* We found it locked up in a room under the care of an old woman, who, by dint of shewing it a thousand times, had

he could not reckon. Dr Dibdin says the number of the pillars in the crypt of Bayeux is *about* six; Mr Turner says *twelve*; M. Pluquet, author of the *History of Bayeux*, and a native of the city, informs us that there are *eight*. For my own part, I did not reckon them.

* I shall abstain from entering into any consideration of the question respecting the antiquity, or the author, of this extraordinary monument, which others, with more patience and learning, have agitated in vain. From all that I have read, however, I am inclined to be of Mr Turner's opinion, viz. that it is the work of Matilda. "No one," says he, "appears so likely to have undertaken such a task as the female most nearly connected with the principal personage concerned in it, and especially if we consider what the character of this female was. The details which it contains are so minute, that they could scarcely have been known, except at the time when they took place; the letters agree in form with those upon Matilda's tomb; and the manners and customs of the age are also preserved."—*Letters from Normandy*, vol. ii. p. 239. In describing this tapestry, Mr Turner falls into a singular mistake, observing that the events are distributed into *seventy-two* compartments, whereas there are only *fifty-seven*.

acquired some knowledge of the history it represents. The tapestry is a piece of linen, about twenty inches wide, and two hundred and fourteen feet long, and is coiled upon a species of windlass, which stands in one corner of the apartment. In the centre of the room, opposite the window, is a large round table covered with green baize; and on the other side of this table stands the old woman, who, having seized upon one end of the tapestry, pulls it out by the yard, muttering and gabbling the history of the compartment, which lies upon the table as it is unwound from the windlass. When you have looked long enough—in her opinion at least—upon the first compartment, another is unwound, and as fast, or faster, than the eye can comprehend the history of the scene, it is drawn by, and folded up upon a chair, placed on the other side of the table for the purpose. The subject commemorated in this singular species of chronicle, is the conquest of England by the Normans; and more persons, I imagine, are acquainted with it, than with M. Thierry's three volumes, octavo, on the same subject. The whole is divided into fifty-seven compartments, each representing a scene in this eventful history; and the compartments are separated by a tree, or a piece of architecture. The figures of princes, knights, men at arms, horses, galleys, &c. are wrought upon the linen with thread and worsted, and, although rude enough, give a very tolerable notion of the costume, arms, and armour of those times. For the careful reader of history, it is of the highest value; and, for my own part, though no antiquary, I consider the mere examination of this tapestry worth a journey from London to Bayeux. Learned men, possessing more leisure and patience than I have at my command, have instituted very laborious inquiries respecting the author of this work, some attributing it to Queen Matilda and her maids, others, to Maud. To me it appears very much like

a labour of love; and I think, with Turner, that no one is so likely to have achieved it as the wife of the hero of the story.

At the townhouse, which was formerly the bishop's palace, I had the pleasure of hearing a wigless lawyer pleading before a wigless judge; but what was the nature of the cause, or the merit of the pleader, I could not stop to inquire. In coming out of the court, my guide pointed out to me the little bureau where people are married before the civil authorities; and, in fact, as I was looking wistfully at this temple of Hymen, a very pretty female worshipper, followed by her other half, emerged from the sanctuary, and threw, as she passed, a triumphant look at me, from a pair of pretty but bold eyes. Perhaps the female Bajocenses, like the women of ancient Egypt, are the lords of the ascendant in marriage; but, even at Caen, I have observed, that, in all matters relating to the matrimonial economy, the ladies bear the bell at the outset. As they advance beyond the honeymoon, the empire reverts to the legitimate authorities; but, in yielding up her power, the woman may exclaim, as Vitellius did to the rascal who killed him, "I have been your master!" In another apartment of the townhouse,—to pass, by a very natural transition, from marriage to war,—I saw an ancient, rude painting, supposed to represent the battle of Fourigny. My little guide told me, what I could see very distinctly, that it was a battle-piece; but what battle it was, lay beyond his knowledge; and no wonder, for the bishop himself informed me that the subject of the piece was not exactly known. In the yard of this same townhouse, I witnessed the most extraordinary military spectacle I have ever beheld.* It

* M. Pluquet, in his clever and amusing History of Bayeux, has a whole chapter on the "*Milice Bourgeoise*," in which he observes,—"L'usage de confier des armes aux habitants pour

was a company of some ten or a dozen men, drawn up, rank and file, as soldiers, with muskets in their hands; but so ragged, wretched, woe-begone was their appearance, that I think it must have been some of their ancestors that Shakespeare had in his eye, when, in speaking of certain French soldiers, he said they durst not attempt to shake the snow off their cassocks for fear of shaking themselves to pieces. Although I have all the disposition on earth to be grave at the sight of misery, it was here so travestied and be-deviled, by putting on a military air, that I could not restrain myself, and burst out into immoderate fits of laughter; and the poor fellows, who knew very well what had roused my risibility, cast a sly look at me as they defiled and stole out under the archway, at the command of their superior, who certainly was somewhat less ragged than his regiment. If ever Hobbes's theory of laughter was verified, it was here; for I think I must have instinctively instituted some comparison between those poor devils and myself, and laughed at the difference.

Being desirous of seeing the principal production of the industry of the Bajocenses, I visited a lace-shop, and had the better portion of its contents laid

la garde des villes et le maintien du bon ordre, est fort ancien, et doit son origine au regime féodal. Les seigneurs faisoient faire le guet à leurs vassaux; les évêques, les moines même, usaient de ce droit. Au XIII^{me} siècle les religieux de Saint Vigor faisoient garder la foire Toussaint par leurs vassaux," p. 237. Several attempts were made to free the inhabitants from the necessity of exhibiting their wretchedness in this manner, but without effect. They always petitioned to have the "privilege" restored to them, and succeeded by dint of importunity. The historian speaks of their having possessed a "fine uniform" about the commencement of the eighteenth century, and I suspect it was the remains of that uniform that they had on their backs the day I saw them; for nothing less than the wear and tear of a hundred years could have reduced any human garments to so fearful a state of raggedness.

out before me.* Many of the patterns were exceedingly beautiful; but a few pieces of Brussels lace, of the most tasteful patterns, and exquisitely fine, threw the Bayeux manufacture into the shade. However, I found one piece of very elegant workmanship, which I purchased as a specimen of Bayeux ingenuity. In a small print-shop of this city, among caricatures, and coloured prints of the commonest description, I found a *Mater Dolorosa* of Sapo Ferrato, engraved in a very exquisite manner by Vincens, a French artist, whose name I had never before heard of. This also I purchased as a memorial of Bayeux.

Taking a fresh horse from the *Hôtel de Luxembourg*, we started off about two o'clock for the small village of Port, on the sea-shore.† The country on both sides of the road is rich, well wooded, and cultivated like a garden; and, being in some places a little hilly, and broken into moderately deep hollows, it reminded me a good deal of South Wales and Devonshire. Here and there we observed the chimneys of a chateau peeping up from among the trees, and in one instance the building, antique, quiet, and moss-covered, threw its gray shadow upon the bosom of a stream which flowed at the foot of the wall. As we drew near the sea, the land assumed a different feature, swelling into high downs, and growing barer

* The manufacture of lace is not, however, of very old standing at Bayeux, having been first introduced so late as the year 1740, by a M. Clement, whose name the inhabitants have gratefully preserved from oblivion. Before the Revolution, about four thousand persons were employed in this species of manufacture; but at present the number is much smaller. The manufacture of porcelain, introduced by M. Langlois, a relation of M. Cavalier, the Protestant banker of Caen, is likely to prove of the highest importance to the city. This porcelain is handsome, and, in general, capable of withstanding the action of fire, so that it may be employed, as M. Pluquet observes, in the kitchen, instead of copper.

† See Appendix, No. IV.

and barer of wood. At length, we caught a glimpse of the bright blue waves between the foldings of two hills, and, in a few minutes more, the long, level, monotonous line of the ocean presented itself. When we drove up to the door of the village inn, the Count de Revedin, whom I had met two days before at M. Lair's at Caen, came out before we could alight, to shake hands with me, and welcome us to the village. "If you are come to eat," says he, "it is unlucky: I have devoured every thing in the village."—"What! have they no bread?" I inquired. "O, yes!" said he; "they have bread and butter, but nothing else."—"Never mind," said I, "we return to Bayeux to dine;" and, without entering, or saying another word, I ran down like an idolater to worship Oceanus, who, according to all theogonists, is one of the oldest of the gods. I had not seen the sea for five months. The roar, the foam, the restlessness of its waters, the smell which the air acquires by blowing over it, the rattling of the pebbles, the dancing of the sea-weed on the surf, the wheeling sea-mews, with their white wings twinkling in the evening sun,—all these things, common, but not commonplace, inspired me with a delight which every one has felt, but which never can be described. Here I walked to and fro in boyish ecstasy, and put my hand into the waves, and tasted the water. When the fever of enjoyment had somewhat abated, I began to observe the features of the scene. It was a common fishing village, far from every great road, and lying entirely out of the track of commerce or business. No one, I suppose, ever visited it, except for the purpose of seeing the ocean, or perhaps of bathing in it. Eleven boats, which I saw hauled up on the beach, and counted, constituted the whole navy of Port; and numerous nets, which appeared to have seen some service, were spread upon the pebbles to dry, while others were in the process of being woven. All the chemises, petti-

coats, kerchiefs, &c. of the ladies of Port, were likewise spread upon the pebbles to dry during the next day, which was Sunday, and two or three urchins were at play in their vicinity. We observed a range of breakers running out to a considerable distance from the shore, and opposite them was a large board, on which was an inscription informing bathers, that at the extremity of the range, there was a concealed precipice in the water two hundred feet deep. But nine or ten feet are as good as a thousand for drowning persons. Returning to the inn, I conversed for some time with the Count de Revedin, a native of the Venetian states, who invited me, when I should pass into Italy, to spend some time with him at his father's house, between Ferrara and Venice. He is a fine, intellectual looking man, with large, high forehead, gray eyes, and light hair. I shall be disappointed if he does not hereafter distinguish himself. He had come down from Bayeux to Port on foot to see the sea, and we left him setting out on a stroll among the rocks. It was on the road to Port that, in coming down, we had observed a curious example of the gallantry of the Normans. Two women, a man, and a stout lad, were walking along before us. Neither the man nor the lad were laden, but on the left shoulder of the elder of the women was a good stout pig, which this female Milo held by the fore-legs, while the animal, who had not the wit to think of biting her ear, was kicking and squeaking most fearfully. The man was walking by her side, talking with her very coolly,—and was perhaps her husband,—but did not, as far as we observed, attempt to relieve her of her burden. It is true they may have been carrying it in turns, and that we may have overtaken them when it was the woman's turn; but the fair generally labour very much in Normandy, without, however, appearing to consider it any hardship.

When we returned to Bayeux, it was dinner time,

and we joined the company assembled at the table-d'hôte. These, we afterwards learned, were some of the grandees of the city; and certainly, if affectation and consequential airs are marks of dignity, the Bayeux magnates were at least equal to princes. The conversation turned chiefly upon travelling, literature, and the fine arts; and though the observations were neither very new nor very profound, they were delivered and received with as much satisfaction as if they had been oracular. Several of the company had been in Italy, and were therefore to be regarded as authorities in all matters of art; for it is well known, that when a man passes through a town in which there are many fine statues and pictures, the principles of art and the rules of criticism infect him in the same manner as any other contagious distemper. I did not join in the conversation, not because I disdained to talk with fops, but because I was hoarse, and feared that the gentlemen might also be musical, and run the risk of being thrown into convulsions by my inharmonious notes. On this account, I followed the dictates of Pythagoras, and listened submissively to the opinions of the wise. The dinner itself was remarkably good, and consisted of seven or eight courses,—soup, beef, fowl, fish, custards, &c. besides the dessert, which we could not stay to partake of. But the manner of serving it up was rough and careless. Having dined, we mounted our cabriolet, and dashed away towards Caen. Night soon overtook us; and darkness had no sooner descended upon the earth, than we observed the singular aversion of the Normans for the night. The roads were as silent and as lonely as if they had lain through a deserted country. Not the crack of a whip, or the neigh of a horse, or the rolling of a wheel, was heard. The tramp of our own horse alone broke the spell. These people have certainly no relationship to the owl; and a highwayman, unless

he choose to exercise his profession by day, must here soon be reduced to what is vulgarly termed "short commons." It was a cold, brilliant night; and the few church spires which were visible were finely relieved against a sky thickly sprinkled with stars. As we passed through a village, or beheld it a little to our right or left, we observed pale streams of light thrown across the road, or upon the trees, from bedroom windows, whence we inferred that the peasants were of Franklin's opinion, and chose rather to ruin the tallow-chandler than allow the morning sunshine to go to waste. As we drew near Caen, I observed upon the edge of the horizon that earthly *aurora borealis* which the lamps of a great city produce; and the appearance, however feeble in comparison, called to my mind that long line of splendour observable at night when the traveller draws near the great and glorious capital of England. In another moment the wheels of our cabriolet rattled on the pavement; and the little journey to and from Bayeux, which had given me so much pleasure, might be said to be at an end.

CHAPTER XIII.

Journey to Falaise—Scenery—Norman Farmers—Mount Joly, or the Devil's Breach—Hôtel du Grand Turc—City and Castle by Moonlight—Talbot's Tower—Negligence of the Authorities—Arlette's Fountain—Arlette's Chamber in the Castle—Prison of Prince Arthur of Bretagne—Trait of Manners—Rocks of Noron—Exquisite Prospect—The King's Printer at Falaise—M. Galeron—Public Library—Worship of the Virgin—Suburb and Church of Guibray—St Denys and his Head—Church of St Gervais—Ugliness of the Women—William the Conqueror born in two Places—Bust of the Bastard.

Wednesday, April 28.—I HAD purposely deferred visiting the Bocage,* or woody portion of Normandy, until spring should have clothed it in all its beauty. Believing the proper moment to have now arrived, I set out upon my little tour, and left Caen in the diligence about three o'clock in the afternoon. The weather was beautiful, the sky being perfectly cloudless, the heat great, but by no means disagreeable,

* The city of Falaise is not included in the Bocage, the most eastern limits of which do not appear to extend much farther in that direction than Condé sur Noireau. I say *appear*, because the limits of this portion of Normandy are somewhat uncertain. The name *Bocage* is rapidly falling into desuetude. M. Seguin, the rude historian of the district, thus explains the origin of the appellation:—“La pays ei-devant connu sous le nom de Boeage, tire son nom des immenses forêts dont il était presque entièrement couvert, et dont celles de St Sever, de Gávrai, de Gors, d'Ardenne, et une quantité d'autres bois, de moindre étendue, sont des restes.”—*Essai sur l'Histoire de l'Industrie du Bocage en général*, &c. p. 10.

being tempered by a fine fresh breeze. The country about Caen I have already described as a vast undulating plain, without interest or beauty; but the spring had now shed a kind of charm even over those monotonous steppes. The whole plain, as far as the eye could reach, was covered with young corn, interspersed with patches of the colza, now in full blossom; and the yellow flower of this plant, contrasting with the fresh bright green of the wheat, and bending and quivering in the wind, communicated an interest to the landscape, which in other seasons of the year it cannot possess. On our right hand, at no great distance, was the small narrow valley of the Orne, which intersects the country in an almost straight line from south to north, and is nearly the only feature of variety it here possesses.

In about two hours, I observed a sensible change in the character of the scenery. The land rose here and there into small eminences, not sufficiently high to be denominated hills; and groves, and thickets, and immense orchards in full blossom, already began to proclaim that we were approaching the Bocage. My companions, honest farmers from the interior, returning home from the fair of Caen, were agreeable, communicative, and by no means ignorant persons, who explained to me, as we rode along, the process of making cider (the vintage of Normandy); the reason why the cider of a particular district is superior to that of others; described the mode of living in the country; the state of feeling as respects the government, the laws, taxation, and religion, which prevails among the peasantry; and, generally, whatever related to their own condition and mode of life. Their appearance, with their blue smock frocks, tanned complexion, and bushy hair, was rough and rude enough; but their manners were mild and inoffensive, and I soon discovered, that a few agreeable words were all-powerful with them.

Although there are no forests in this part of Normandy, the trees along the sides of the road are numerous, and not unfrequently entirely mask the country for a considerable distance ; but the glimpses of scenery caught through casual breaks, or openings in these small strips of forest, are sometimes very fine. Here, as elsewhere in Normandy, the villages on the roadside are exceedingly few, and the eye no where finds those pretty cottages, and snug farm houses, which constitute one of the principal charms of an English landscape. The country is well cultivated, but the dwellings of the cultivators are seldom visible to the traveller on the great roads. My companions could by no means explain to me the reason of this phenomenon ; but I suspect it is one of the effects of the ancient despotism of France, during the sway of which the peasants systematically kept as far as possible from the roads, to avoid the vexatious visits of the noblesse, and the creatures of the government, who might be passing to and fro, as is at present the case in Turkey, and other despotic countries of the East.

A little before sunset, we discovered Mount Joly, or the *Brèche au Diable*, on the left hand, but at too great a distance from the road to allow of our judging of its picturesque beauties. This circumstance I regret on my own account, though the reader will lose nothing by it, the place having been lately visited and described by my friend Trébutien, of Caen, from whose manuscript tour I have selected the following eloquent passage on this extraordinary and romantic spot :—

“ On the left hand of the road from Caen to Falaise, not far from the village of Potigny, is the Rock of St Quentin, or Mount Joly, which is unquestionably one of the most remarkable scenes in Normandy. The popular name of this rock is the Devil's Breach, —a name in perfect keeping with the fantastic and

savage configuration of this extraordinary place. After following for some time the course of a small valley, we suddenly turn round, and discover this dusky rock, rent in twain from the base to the summit, and gaping, as it were, with its vast open jaws towards the sky. In looking at this singular spot, which is really a grand and terrible object, we are tempted to imagine that Satan actually had some hand in its formation.

“ Let the reader imagine to himself a long chain of lofty rocks, traversing a broad and magnificent valley, which is abruptly divided in twain by a deep chasm, or rather abyss, at the bottom of which a small river rolls along its troubled waters. From the perpendicular sides of this abyss project enormous rocks, which appear as if suspended in the air, and threaten every moment to roll down into the gulf below. This rending of the mountain could only have been produced by one of those tremendous convulsions of nature which overwhelm and change certain countries of the earth. It is pretended, but with little probability, that the valley which extends towards the south was formerly an immense lake, the waters of which, forcing themselves a passage through every opposing obstacle, burst upon the mountain, and rushed towards the sea on the north. Nothing of all this mass of waters now remains but the pretty little river Poussendre, which falls, in broken and foaming cascades, over the ledges of rock that form the bottom of the chasm, where it turns two oil mills, the monotonous and echoing sounds of which are the only noises which disturb this wild solitude.

“ There formerly existed various traditions relating to this extraordinary and truly infernal scene ; but they have been gradually effaced by time from the memory of the peasantry. At present, if you question them respecting the origin of the rent in the mountain, they reply, ‘ Our old men have always observed it precisely as it is ; and all we know of the matter

is, that it is the work of the Devil.' It is true, that a few of the 'ancients' of the country will occasionally allude vaguely to certain combats which, in old times, took place on this spot between the Devil and St Quentin,—to the latter of whom a small chapel has been erected on the level summit of the rocks.

"Upon the crest of the mountains, on the eastern side, a monument has been erected, which increases the effect of the savage and picturesque aspect of the place. This is the tomb of Marie Jolie, an actress no less distinguished for her talent, than for the rectitude of her character, who died about the end of the last century. The white marble of which this mausoleum is constructed, appears from a distance, among the dark foliage of pines and cypresses which surround it, like a pale star in a sombre and obscure sky. Having climbed to the top of the mountain, you are admitted into the tomb through a small iron door, by an ignorant cobbler, who lives in a small hut hard by. The monument is of the most elegant workmanship, from the chisel of Lesneur, the same artist who sculptured the ornaments of that of J. J. Rousseau at Ermenonville. On the front is a bas-relief, representing Marie Jolie of the size of life, and supposed to be an excellent likeness. The tomb stands on the edge of the precipice, from which it is separated only by a narrow pathway, which one cannot tread without a degree of giddiness. M. Dulomboy, in erecting this tomb to the memory of a wife whom he appears to have loved with the most enthusiastic passion, has been lavish in tumulary ornaments. The inscriptions, especially, appear to be too numerous, particularly as, for the most part, they are filled with a cold and insipid sentimentality. This place once enjoyed a great reputation, but this is now dying away. Nevertheless, it must always be an object of interest for all kindly and susceptible minds."

After travelling about another half hour, I disco-

vered, through the trees, the tower of the ancient church of Guibray, and, in a few minutes more, the donjon of the castle of Falaise, perched upon a lofty rock, and looking doubly romantic in the sober glimmering of twilight. The approach to the city from Caen is through a genteel suburb; and we met several ladies and gentlemen, fashionably dressed, *taking the dust* upon the road. Contrary to the general practice, the rich inhabitants of Falaise have their villas on the roadside; and these, with their fine avenues of trees, new plantations, and gardens, give an air of wealth and life to the landscape.

Among my travelling companions was a jolly, rough-looking citizen of Falaise, who had been at Caen taking leave of his brother, a soldier in the army about to depart for Algiers. He was careful to inform me, that the young man had already reached the rank of corporal, and seemed to expect that the present expedition would certainly be favourable to his promotion. As we were descending the hill towards the ancient moat of the city, we perceived a fine, fair-haired, little boy, about five years old, travelling up alone to meet us, and the eyes of the corporal's brother sparkled with delight at the sight. "It is my child, sir," said he, "my eldest boy!" and forthwith he greeted the little urchin by scolding him heartily for running so fast, and in a tone which he intended should be very rough, but which the boy interpreted differently, for he only smiled, and faced about and ran like a young hare by the side of the diligence towards the city.

The moon, which had been visible for hours in the sky, had now completely "gained the upper hand" of her brother Phœbus, as our romantic poets and novel writers are pleased to term the sun, and had the honour of lighting the diligence into the city of Falaise. We alighted opposite the Hôtel du Grand Cerf; but as I had been recommended to that of the

Grand Turc, I proceeded, by the aid of two little ragged guides, whom I picked up in the streets, towards this important establishment of Guide-Book celebrity. I had first, however, to encounter the solicitations of numerous "conducteurs," some of whom were ambitious of driving me to Paris, others to Vire, others to Argenton, and others to Condé; but I made my escape, as Ulysses did from the Sirens, by turning a deaf ear to their temptations, and, after traversing several narrow and obscure streets, arrived at my hotel.

Here I was met at the door by the landlord himself, who politely conducted me into his house; whence, having tasted some of the coffee and other good things of Falaise, I soon sallied forth again to view the castle and the city by moonlight. As the castle occupies the highest point of the site of the city, I knew that, by proceeding up the first steep street I met, I must certainly approach it; and therefore I strolled on, without asking questions, until I arrived at a long narrow passage between two walls, which appeared to be a *cul-de-sac*. Here I was compelled to make use of the gift of speech, by which extraordinary means, I discovered that my *cul-de-sac* led to the chateau; but on coming up to the wall, I found all ingress prohibited by immense doors, which were carefully closed as in time of war. Descending again into the city, I took the first street on the right hand, which wound round at the foot of the castle walls, towards the public promenade, and the road to Bretagne. They who know what early hours are observed by the Normans, will readily imagine how solitary were the streets, in this remote and unfrequented part of the city, at such a time of night, it being near ten o'clock. Having passed the great pond, which lies between the city and the public promenade, a place little frequented at any time, and which at this moment would have been a prey to utter silence but

for the croaking of the toads, and the sharp, bell-like cry of the musical frogs, I followed the course of the lofty walls of the castle, now partially covered with ivy, until I arrived at the foot of Talbot's Tower, where I paused for some time, to enjoy the singular beauty of the scene. Something should perhaps be allowed for the novelty, the stillness, the solitude; but the place and the ruin are naturally picturesque; and now, silvered over by a pure and brilliant moonlight, and contemplated with an enthusiastic eye, they appeared to possess extraordinary beauties. The massive ruins of the donjon, and the lofty round tower, which appears perfect from below, perched upon a high, rugged cliff; a small stream of water at their foot, dashing and falling into the ancient moat; with the gray, rugged, and frowning rocks of Noron on the opposite side of what in the moonlight appeared to be an abyss, — all these formed a picture of singular interest, at least to the imagination. The fountains of the city, however useful they may be, have a remarkably mean appearance even by night, when most things look well; and the church of the Trinity, the only one I examined by moonlight, appeared to be a structure of no grandeur or merit.

In order to enjoy, as much as possible, the view of the surrounding country which Talbot's Tower commands, I rose next morning a little after four o'clock, and hastened to the castle. The guide being already stirring, I entered without loss of time, and requested my antiquarian cobbler, who was desirous, in accordance with the sage advice of Aristotle, to begin at the beginning, to skip over all minor objects, and conduct me at once to the tower. The sun, however, had already risen, and the most lovely views presented themselves to the eye at every turning. Passing on, with an indifference which greatly annoyed my conductor, by chapel, and college, and ruined chamber, I at length reached the tower, and ascended to its

summit. The sun, as I have observed, had already risen, but the glories of sunrise had not yet departed. The eastern sky was glowing red, while the rest of the heavens was of a glittering silvery blue, the brightness of which almost made the eyes ache; and the earth, broken and unequal, and covered with verdure, was as beautiful as the sky which stretched above it.

It is next to impossible, however, to enjoy a scene of this kind with a commonplace guide by one's side; so I turned my attention to the things close about me, promising myself somewhat more of picturesque pleasure from the rocks of Noron opposite, whither I resolved to be my own guide. The tower* is at present, as it has been for seven or eight years, undergoing repairs; and a portion of the walls, towards the south, is new. The authorities, who have little or no respect for antiquity, dole out the money necessary, just as Shylock gave up his claim upon Antonio's flesh,—with fierce regret; and I suspect the modern part will already be old before the whole be finished. One wheel, which was fixed upon the centre of the tower, for drawing up stones, &c. for the repairs, has already yielded to the attacks of old age, and its remains lie in venerable ruin near the spot where the parapet is hereafter to be; and the second wheel, which now occupies its place, is, as Gil Blas has it, "no chicken." In a small square enclosure, directly above the ancient dungeons, which are not now accessible to the public, is a powder

* It has sometimes been doubted whether this building was really erected by the magnificent, but cruel, Regent; but the industrious researches of M. Galeron, have at length put an end to all uncertainty, by bringing to light the order of Talbot, signed by his own hand, for the money necessary for the construction of the tower. This document, with others relating to the same subject, will be published in a small work on the antiquities of the city, which was already in the press when I was at Falaise.

magazine, which, should it by any accident explode, would blow the Castle of Falaise into the air,—

— And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.

The superstition of peasants and antiquaries invents some foolish legend for every ancient building, and, of course, this renowned ruin is not without its romance. In ancient times, it is said, a certain holy hermit lived upon the heights of Noron; and, gallant knights and hermits being naturally fond of each other's society, a subterranean passage was excavated from the dungeons of the castle to the hermitage, by which the fool who lived upon one rock visited the fool on the other. From the tower, after visiting the subterranean apartments at its base, we proceeded to make the circuit of the donjon, commencing with the window from whence Duke Robert, according to tradition, discovered the beauty of the furrier's daughter.* The next thing we visited was the chamber in which the beautiful Arlette, who must, therefore, have lived with the duke, gave birth to the hero of Normandy,—the man whose name is in every body's mouth in the country; whose actions have conferred an interest upon a hundred scenes; who still, by drawing strangers to the spot, is the benefactor of his native town, which, in spite of its fair, would be little visited, were it not for its castle, and the fame of William the Conqueror. The apartment is small, and has apparently been hollowed out of the wall, at no very remote period; but the guide was positive that it was Arlette's chamber, and informed me, that the lady's bed stood in a small recess on its southern side. In fact, he was as well acquainted with the history of every thing which then took place, as if

* See Appendix, No. V.

he himself had been present, in the character of Dr Slop.

The chief interest of this castle consists in its picturesque position, and the historical associations connected with it; in other respects, it is not very remarkable. A hundred castles in England are of superior architecture, and in more perfect preservation; many are erected on a still better site, and command a more extensive and beautiful prospect; but not one of them has given birth to so illustrious a tyrant. Dr Dibdin, who has the commendable ambition of wishing to have an opinion of his own, whether right or wrong, attempts to rob the castle of this source of interest, by insinuating, that the date of its erection is posterior to the time of William by at least a century; but M. Galeron, whose opinion is of infinitely greater weight, believes it to have been erected in the ninth, or, at latest, in the tenth century.*

From the chamber of Arlette we proceeded to another small apartment in the wall, which, according to the historians and romancers of the middle ages, and my equally credible guide, was the prison in which young Arthur of Brittany was confined, by

* “ Personne encore n’a pu, jusqu’à ce jour, assigner à sa fondation une époque précise et certaine; nous avons cru, cependant, qu’il était possible de la reconnaître à la masse carrée de l’édifice, à la nature de la maçonnerie, et surtout à l’architecture des fenêtres; nous ne la faisons pas remonter au delà du IX^{me} ou du X^{me} siècle.

“ Quelques réparations seraient indispensables pour préserver le donjon d’une ruine prochaine. Les plus pressantes seraient le rétablissement du soubassement de la deuxième fenêtre, tournée vers le midi, et celui du revêtement extérieur de la muraille du nord, jusqu’à une élévation de 12 pieds environ. Puissent ces travaux être promptement entrepris, pour préserver de la destruction n^{rs} des plus beaux monumens qui nous restent de la grandeur et de la puissance de nos pères!” *Statistique, &c.* p. 320.

order of his uncle John. It was here, then, that that famous scene between Hubert and the young prince took place, which Shakespeare's pen has rendered so deeply pathetic, and made a thousand times more celebrated than the narratives of all the historians who ever wrote could have done. The chamber is exceedingly small, and Arthur, and Hubert, and the assassins must have been confoundedly cramped for room. However, there appears to be no reason whatever for doubting that the boy was confined somewhere in the castle; and why not here, as well as any where else?

On leaving the castle, I observed a little trait of manners which may be worth describing: on going towards the cottage of the guide, which it was necessary to enter in order to obtain change, I found the door open, and the lady of the house in her chemise, preparing to dress. Upon our entering, she escaped, and hid herself behind the bed, whence, during the little dialogue which ensued, she often put out her head, in order to join in the business of the day. I cannot conscientiously say, however, that she was either young or pretty.

From the castle I proceeded to the rocks of Noron, or *Mont Mirat*. Crossing the small river at the foot of the castle, I followed a steep, and somewhat winding path; and, after skirting the base of the huge rocks for some time, discovered an opening, by which it seemed possible to crawl up to the summit. Having reached the top, and proceeded to the extremity of the ridge, I enjoyed one of the most delightful prospects that can be conceived. On the right hand was the road to Brittany, skirted by the lofty trees which form the public promenade, and running along the base of a green swelling hill, crested with tufted trees, and afterwards losing itself in thick groves. Directly in front of me was the castle, with its gray donjon and lofty tower, throwing its vast shadow

over the stream and valley below, and half concealing the tall poplars which shot up from the edge of the river, while the upper portion of them was covered with sunshine. On the left was the city of Falaise,—long lines of buildings, interspersed with large masses of verdure, and gilded by the morning sun. Early as it still was, the inhabitants were beginning to light their fires, and the smoke, curling up from these, was beaten down again by the wind, and spread itself, like a thin blue haze, over the narrow little valley which sweeps round the foot of the chateau. Beyond the city, on the left, was the road to Caen, and Mont Joly in the distance; and, immediately beneath my feet, as it were, the beautiful Valdante, with its shining stream, and bright green verdure, and romantic gardens and villas. Behind the castle, and a little to the left of it, were the suburb and church of Guibray; and, on all sides, as far as the eye could reach, neat villas, imbosomed in groves, sprinkled the country, and shed an air of singular wealth and beauty over the landscape. To say every thing in one word, it reminded me of some of the scenes I had seen on the banks of the Wey, and in Devonshire. Here, as I sat musing among the vast rocks, I heard the cuckoo, for the first time this year; while the whole air seemed alive with the voices of other birds,—the nightingale, the skylark, the linnet, the thrush, and the blackbird. At the foot of the hill, on the southern side, was an ancient cottage, the sight of which might be of use to a romance writer, as it would furnish him with an exact idea of those miserable dwellings to which heroes sometimes retire for variety, and to give their sage historians an opportunity of being exceedingly cynical or pathetic upon the vicissitudes of human life. It was just four walls built, like the Cyclopean cities of old, without mortar, but of exceedingly small gray stones, and covered with thatch, which, having been drenched

and rotted by the rains of winter, was now of a brownish green colour, and covered with patches of moss and lichen. A hole, through which, in case of conflagration, a man might creep out, served for a window; and another hole, of larger dimensions, was the door. Though very far from being of a pastoral disposition, and loving the society of mankind beyond any thing upon earth, I quitted with regret the delightful solitude of these rocks, to examine the curiosities of the city.

The first person on whom I called was M. Brée, the king's printer at Falaise, to whom I had a letter of introduction, from a professor of the Lycée of Caen. I found the old gentleman confined to his bed by the gout, I believe; but, although he was thus prevented from accompanying me about the city himself, he had, he said, a friend who would be happy to officiate in his stead. This friend soon arrived, and proved to be M. Galeron, the principal author of the "*Statistique de l'Arrondissement de Falaise*," a man of talent and learning, and of extremely amiable and obliging manners. He had at that moment a small "*Guide to Falaise*" in the press, and, while he looked for an instant at a proof, and gave some directions to the printers, I employed myself in examining the mode of working, &c. The press used is the old wooden one, which was employed in England before the invention of the Stanhope press; and the ink is distributed with balls, not with rollers, as with us; but the press-work, considering the roughness of the paper, was not bad, and the composition appeared to be careful and correct.

M. Galeron, who is a barrister, had to make his appearance in court at ten o'clock, where he would remain for one hour: before and after that, his time, he said, was entirely at my disposal. As I had seen the castle, the first thing we visited was a little hill on the road to Brittany, whence a peculiarly charming

view of the meadows of the Ante, the castle, the town, the rocks of Noron, &c. is obtained. We discoursed, as we went along, on architecture, and antiquarian literature, in which, by the way, I am no conjurer; and I found that, though a native of another part of Normandy, my companion had settled at Falaise from a passion for its antiquities. He remembered and spoke in the kindest terms of Mr Wiffen, who has written a pretty copy of verses, entitled, "A Farewell to Normandy;" and afterwards shewed me a copy of the translation of Garcillaso, presented to him by the translator. I told him I had not the honour of being personally known to Mr Wiffen; but that, from the tone in which I every where found him spoken of, I did not doubt that he was no less amiable than he was clever.

From the environs we very quickly returned to the city, in order to pay a visit to the public library, an institution which owes its existence, I believe, to the exertions of M. Galeron. The books are arranged, at present, in a small apartment of the Hôtel de Ville; but it is in contemplation to erect or appropriate some entire building to the library, which appears to be exceedingly well managed. Instead of laying out their funds in the purchase of rare editions, and curious old books, works of undoubted utility, histories, voyages, and travels, and the masterpieces of modern literature are bought. The only piece of luxury which I observed was the great work which Napoleon caused to be written on Egypt; but this was presented to the library, upon application, by the government. Numerous translations from the English,—Shakespeare, Hume, Byron, &c.—adorned the shelves, and appeared to have been much read: a few inferior authors, not very deserving of being translated, were also there; but, in general, the books are well selected. Moore is, in general, a great favourite with the French,—as much, perhaps, for his faults as for his

beauties; but the stern simplicity of Campbell's lyrical pieces is beyond their reach: the "Pleasures of Hope," and "Gertrude of Wyoming," are in more favour. Of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, &c. little, in general, is known beyond the names: but all ranks and conditions of men read and admire Sir Walter Scott: however, I did not see his novels in the public library of Falaise. Among the most valuable of the few old books, I observed Ducange's Glossary, and Moreri's Dictionary; but the library did not possess a copy of Bayle. The philosopher of Rotterdam is more dreaded than Rousseau or Voltaire. Even at Caen you only find the *imperfect* edition of the Historical and Critical Dictionary. The books of this institution are lent out, like those of a circulating library; and I was informed, that a considerable number were in constant reading.

From the public library M. Galeron took me to his own house, where he presented me with a copy of his works, together with various prints of things and places I had seen, or was about to see. It being near ten o'clock, I then set out on my visit to the churches. The church of the Trinity, except a single doorway, which is elegant, but of soft and crumbling stone, is a poor structure, in which there is nothing remarkable, except a few casts of statues of the Virgin, and two angels, who looked very lively and loving. Southey is perfectly right in denominating catholicism the *Marian religion*; for the Virgin is unquestionably the great divinity—the venerable mother—the Cybele of this new modification of Paganism. Every where I see people bending, and groaning, and praying, and shedding tears, before this idol, which is sometimes beautiful, sometimes ugly, according to the ability of the idol maker; but every where as much an idol as Crishna, or Bhavani, or the Lingam in Hindostan. Either there never was such a thing as idolatry, or the catholics are idolaters; for the worship, the

“culte,” which they render the Virgin and the saints, is precisely of the same nature as that which the Hindoos and other Pagans offer up to their idols.

From the church of the Trinity I went to Guibray, the suburb where the great fair, the second in the kingdom, is annually held. Dr Dibdin and others describe this suburb as having very much the air of a deserted city, the houses being shut up, and the streets empty; but this is true only of that particular class of houses which are erected merely for the fair: the others are inhabited and open all the year round, like other houses and shops. The only business carried on here appeared to be weaving; for, as I walked along, I heard a loom at work in almost every house.

Upon ascending the hill to the church, I found it, for a wonder, free from old women, the class of the population which seems to have taken exclusive possession of the churches. There was, in fact, not a soul in the building; and, on this account, I entered it with more than ordinary pleasure. The silence was broken only by the sound of my own footsteps, and the rattling of the casement of the great window over the altar, which, notwithstanding that the heat of the day was excessive, was strongly shaken by the wind. The ornaments of the altar I found to be in the usual gaudy and tasteless style; but, in a small chapel on the right hand, there was a painting so singularly ridiculous, that it may be regarded as a real curiosity: this was St Denys, or Dionysius, or some such person, decapitated, and carrying his head in his hands. Numerous spectators are represented running after him, and regarding him with astonishment—as well they might; but the saint and his head are by no means disturbed, and walk on as friendly and as comfortably as when they were more nearly related, the eyes merely looking a little more sleepy than ordinary. Beckford has treated this subject

somewhat differently in the frontispiece to his "Memoirs of Extraordinary Painters," where the saint holds out the severed member at arms' length, and appears to be looking his own head in the face. Many persons imagine we do wrong in excluding certain creations of art from our churches; but God forbid that a protestant church should ever be polluted by such absurd abominations as this! It is enough that the idea of God fills our temples and the spirits of the worshippers: prayer and thanksgiving and a contrite heart, are better than images or pictures. While I was contemplating this piece of folly, and making a note or two in my book, a painter entered with the sacristan, to retouch something on the other side of the altar; and their talking, spitting, and noise, very quickly caused me to retreat. Making my escape from the interior, I obtained permission to visit the cemetery, where I expected to be alone; but I was disappointed. The gravedigger was there, merrily executing his functions, — a little infirm old man, who appeared likely very soon to furnish employment to his successor. Two other persons also were in the cemetery, cutting the tall rank grass which grew on and about the graves, for their cows, I imagine; in order to expedite the transmigrations of matter from one class of animals to another. I had heard the outside of the church described as extremely ancient, and it had certainly the appearance of being so; but this was its only recommendation, for it was neither striking nor elegant.

On my return to Falaise, I visited the church of St Gervais, which is a fine structure, commenced, it is supposed, in the time of William the Conqueror, and finished in the ages immediately succeeding. A row of small chapels, eighteen in number, runs round the whole building, the nave and choir of which, taken together, are about one hundred and twenty

feet long.* Behind the altar there is, as usual, a chapel to the Virgin, before whose statue two small tapers were burning. Being exceedingly fatigued, I sat down here for some time, looking at the Virgin, and moralizing, as men do when they are tired, upon the flight of time, the succession of generations, and the vanity of all human pursuits, not even excepting travelling. In the midst of my profound meditations, which, in a more drowsy person might have ended in sleep, I was disturbed by the entrance of an old gentleman, who, seeing the tapers burning before the image, and being by no means a prodigal idolater, forthwith commenced a philippic against the beadle, and stumped out upon his staff in search of the delinquent, in order to have the tapers extinguished. Perhaps, however, it was in reality to inform him that a heretic was in the church, who might maliciously pollute some of the sacred things. When I had made the tour of the church, looked at all the chapels, pictures, images, &c. I went out, and found my little old man stumping back to the church, without the beadle.

After this I strolled about the city looking at the shops, the hotels, the fountains, the costume, and the features of the inhabitants. There are at present, I imagine, very few beauties like Arlette Verprey at Falaise; for, during all my rambles in and about the place, I scarcely saw one pretty woman. Perhaps, however, it was because beauty was a scarce commodity here, even in those times, that the furrier's daughter, whom we will imagine to have been handsome, captivated the coarse mind of the Duke; for I cannot imagine any cause, which, in so fine a natural position, should have produced any degeneracy in the human form.

* *Statistique de l'Arrondissement de Falaise*, p. 344. I mean *French* feet. The measurement was performed by the author of the Statistics, not by me.

In returning toward my hotel I met the honest citizen with whom I had travelled in the diligence from Caen, and he immediately doffed his cap and saluted me. "Sir," said he, "I was this moment thinking of you. I wonder, I was just saying to myself, whether the gentleman with whom I travelled yesterday has seen that church;" pointing to that of St Gervais. "Oh, yes," I replied, "I have seen it."—"Well," said he, "and have you seen the house of Guillaume?"—"By Jupiter!" I exclaimed, "I had forgotten it."—"What! forgotten the house of Guillaume? Well, you certainly would not think of leaving Falaise without visiting the house in which the Conqueror was born. Will you allow me to conduct you to it?" I had already seen one spot on which William was born, but it did not signify; a great man might be born in two places; or, at all events, there was no harm in examining the two places which laid claim to the honour. The Falaisian had now another little boy with him, and I said I should be obliged if he or his little boy would be my guide on this occasion. "We will go all together," said he; "I have been there a thousand times." So, without more words, we proceeded to the scene of Arlette's and Dr Dibdin's labours, where the former, according to one tradition, brought forth a hero, by the help of the *sage-femme*; and where the latter, with the aid of soap and a scrubbing brush, brought out the features of a man from a coat of dirt and lime. Over the door was this inscription:—"House of William the Conqueror;" and immediately following, the encouraging words—"Richard donne à boire et à manger." In other words, it was a *cabaret*.*

On entering, I found M. Richard, the man who

* Cabaret is said to be a compound of the words *cab*, Celtic for head, and *arietis*, the genitive of *aries*, a ram, because anciently small inns had a ram's head for their sign.

“gave to eat and drink,” labouring hard at some culinary operation by the fireside, and, after hearing the historical proof that William was born in that house, which simply amounted to this, that from time immemorial some people had been accustomed to say so, while, as it was easy to see, the house was very ancient,* and had large fire-places, we mounted the staircase to see the effigies of the Conqueror. When we had ascended nearly to the top of the first flight, we discovered the face of a statue peeping out, like that of a man in the pillory, from the brick and mortar, which we were desired to be complaisant enough to take for an exact likeness of William,—in which case Matilda must have had a very ugly husband, for the nose is that of a Calmuck Tartar, and the other features are not greatly better. The bust, I dare say, is ancient, but I know no more reason why it should be taken for the son of Arlette than for Tom Thumb, or Blue Beard, or Jack the Giant Killer, or any other hero of that stamp.

* The owner, of course, believes it to have stood eight hundred years; but it will perhaps be sufficient if we allow it three centuries.

CHAPTER XIV.

Departure from Falaise—Scenery—Druidical Monuments—Travelling Companions—Great Politicians—Arrival at Argentan—"Peep o' Day" Hotel—A Family Party—Streets and Houses of Argentan—The Churches—Ancient Tower—Lectures on White Magic—A Literary Quack—The Malay Language—Road to Seez—Splendid Cathedral—Honest Landlord—History of Two English Milords and their Money—Charlotte Corday—Arrival at Alençon.

HAVING seen every thing which appeared to possess any interest for me at Falaise, I set out early in the afternoon for Argentan. The road, which lies at first through a richly cultivated country, tolerably well wooded, traverses several very beautiful small valleys, or rather ravines, which intersect the undulating plain, and generally contain a clear pure stream, and a succession of small groves in their bosom. A few leagues beyond Falaise, we passed some large stones standing upright, like those of Stonehenge, on a wide plain, on our left, which are supposed by the antiquarians of the country to be Druidical;* and

* Druidical monuments are by no means uncommon in this part of France. The Abbé Manet, in speaking of a very remarkable one which occurs in Brittany, observes,—"Ce beau peulvan, ou *pilier sacré*, est situé en la paroisse de Carfantin, au milieu d'un vaste champ, qu'il domine avec majesté. D'abord simple type de l'être tout puissant qui, comme une colonne pompeuse, soutient seul le poids de l'univers, il finit par devenir l'objet direct du culte idolatrique des habitans de la contrée. Il est d'un seul bloc, d'un grain très-dur, mais que les dents acérées du temps ont néanmoins réussi à écailler en quelques endroits, et d'un poids présumé de 211.752 livres. Sa forme, brute comme lorsqu'il fut tiré de la carrière, est à peu près pyramidale; et nous lui avons trouvé 29 pieds de hauteur visible, sur

shortly afterwards, observed on the same side of the road, a gray rocky promontory, higher, perhaps, than that of Noron, overlooking a small dell, thick with trees. As we approach Argentan, the country rises into hills, not round and pointed, but in long ridges, like the swells of the ocean. In the distance, towards Alençon, a vast ridge, apparently covered with dark forests, swept round like a half moon, with a very sombre and forbidding appearance.

My companions this day were by no means so agreeable as those with whom I had travelled from Caen; two of them especially, a roguish looking fellow, who had the appearance of being a pedlar, and a farmer from the neighbourhood of Alençon, who had served as a soldier under Napoleon. These poor fellows, imagining it would greatly annoy me, amused themselves for some time in railing against the English, insisting upon it to each other, that it was a mere piece of good luck for England that the Emperor did not persist in his design of subduing it. Like many honest people in our own country, who have a knowledge of the science of politics by instinct, they appeared to themselves—which was all that was necessary—to comprehend most perfectly the public interest of every country in Europe, and spoke like

24 de circonférence vers le bas.”—*De l'Etat Ancien*, &c. du Mont St Michel, p. 54. The reason why Druidical remains are not still more numerous we discover from the following passage of Sismond, containing the anathema of the Council of Nantes, 658, against these relics of the *ancient* idolatry of the country:—“Summo decertare debent studio episcopi, et eorum ministri, ut arbores dæmonibus consecratæ, quas vulgus colit, et in tantâ veneratione habet, ut nec rammum vel surculum inde audeat amputare, radicitus excindantur atque comburantur. Lapides quoque, quos, in ruinosi locis et sylvestribus, dæmonum ludificationibus decepti, venerantur, ubi et vota vovent et deferunt, funditus effodiantur, atque in tali loco projiciantur, ubi nunquam a cultoribus suis inveniri possint.”—*Concil. Ant. Gall.* tome iii. p. 607.

prophets of what was to happen. I verily believe, that, had it been required of them, they could have foretold all the great events that are to affect Europe to the end of the world. It was a small vehicle, like a cabriolet, the only one which travels by day on that road, and we all sat together,—so that I lost nothing of the wisdom which was uttered. At length, however, observing that the postilion looked very grave, and more than once desired them to be silent, supposing I should be offended, I asked him, if he, too, were a politician, and deep in the secrets of the different governments of Europe. The young man smiled, and replied, with a shrug of the shoulders, “*Ma foi, non, monsieur!*” Our statesmen, observing that their political knowledge was treated with contempt and derision, now turned their conversation into another channel, and began to talk of the prices of butter and eggs, and of the fair of Caen, — matters upon which they did not speak amiss; so true is that opinion of Socrates, that men are always eloquent upon subjects with which they are acquainted. As I love exceedingly to converse with men, when they do not attempt to mystify either themselves or me, I now sustained my share of the dialogue, which was conducted with very great decorum. In the course of the afternoon I contrived, by uttering a sharp invective against those Englishmen who abuse foreign nations without knowing any thing about them, to cause it to be understood that I looked with ineffable disdain upon their opinions of England and Englishmen; and I added, that in France the most learned and enlightened were always the most ready to acknowledge the virtue and the greatness of England, while it was left to the ignorant, the grovelling, and the base-minded, to rail at its people and institutions. As I did all this with a smiling countenance and friendly tone, the men seemed to feel that they had been wrong; at all events they

did not persist in their offensive language. To me personally they behaved from beginning to end with great politeness ; and, when railing at my country, they were talking *at* me, not *to* me.

We reached Argentan a little before six o'clock. The vehicle stopped at the Hôtel du Point du Jour, kept by a M. Durand, father to the young man who had been our "conducteur" from Falaise. Here, while they were getting ready my coffee, I walked in the garden, where there was a small family party very curiously employed. Two young ladies, a gentleman about fifty, whom I took to be their father, a girl about twelve years old, and a little boy about four or five, were amusing themselves with rolling walnuts over a sloping board ; the one whose nut rolled farthest upon the path gaining the whole. The boy was pretty, and accustomed to strangers, and I took him up in my arms to kiss him ; but his breath smelled so strongly of brandy that I could scarcely endure him near me. While the group were busy at play, one of those small animals, I imagine, which are so numerous in many French inns, and which take such strange liberties with the human body, suddenly bit one of the ladies above the knee, and, exactly as if she had been alone, she commenced, without the slightest hesitation, a regular search after the delinquent. This little accident happened twice, and twice the economy of the petticoats was disturbed.

After supper, as the Normans term their afternoon meal, I went out to see the town. The streets of Argentan are broad and clean, and the houses built of stone, and in a very tasteful and superior manner. The people, likewise, are generally well dressed, and look altogether as if fortune sometimes passed through the town. Walking through several streets, observing the shops and the costume of the inhabitants, I at length arrived at the little church of St Martin, which

I entered. The furniture of one catholic church in general so much resembles that of another, that little or nothing need be said of it, when the thing has once been described. The only things worthy of notice, which I saw here, were the painted windows, the colours of which were most brilliant and beautiful. In going from this church to that of St Germain, I observed a tower of antique and singular appearance, standing near the centre of a large space, enclosed within high walls. Upon inquiry, I found that this tower originally formed a portion of the fortifications of the city; but is at present used as a military prison, when there are any soldiers at Argentan. It may be about sixty feet high, has low projecting battlements, and a painted Chinese roof, extremely common in Normandy, rising at least fifteen feet above the walls.

The church of St Germain, a large and superb Gothic structure, with fine massive pillars, and painted windows, I found, as usual, in possession of a posse of old women, one of whom was dumb, and went about rattling the chairs, and making that strange noise which accompanies the efforts which dumb persons sometimes make at speaking. The rich lights of sunset streaming in through the tall windows nearly at the top of the building, and falling in glowing masses upon some portions of the nave and the choir, communicated to the scene a more than ordinary poetical character, and, but for the presence of the worshippers of the Virgin, the place would have appeared a real temple of God.

At the breakfast table, next morning, I discovered who the party were whom I had seen the evening before in the garden: the gentleman, as he informed us, was a M. Levesque, son to the translator of Thucydides, and the historian of Russia, and himself an author. He was, he said, about to publish a History of Secret Societies, such as the Free Masons,

the Assassins of Syria and Persia, the Carbonari of Italy, and the White Water Lily of China, &c. and seemed to expect considerable profit, and some fame, from the undertaking. A gentleman present demanded of him how, if he were not himself a free mason, he could know any thing particular about the society, and, if he were, how he could divulge it? The expression of countenance which accompanied his reply was exactly that which, I imagine, sat upon the face of Square in Tom Jones, when he was arguing with Thwackum upon "the eternal fitness of things." "Sir," said he, "I divulge nothing. I merely give an account of how, and when, and where, the society began; what ceremonies are practised at its meetings, &c. But for the secret—ah hah! ma foi, I take good care not to divulge that!" He then informed us, that he was travelling through the whole of France, lecturing on "White Magic;" that he had been at Caen; that he was now lecturing at Argentan, where, it seems, the authorities, captivated by his wisdom, shewed him an attention "*toute particulière*." On a small scale, he might be supposed to represent the famous Hippias of Elis, with whose journeyings and lecturings Plato makes himself and his readers so merry, and whom "the authorities" of Sparta treated with an attention no less particular than that which the good people in office at Caen and Argentan bestowed upon M. Levesque. He told us, that at Caen he had "astonished the natives," by speaking English, and German, and Malay, to them. At the words "English," and "Malay," I began to prick up my ears a little, in the hope that I had found an universal scholar, who could speak to me in my own language, and converse upon Hindoostan. Alas! I was disappointed. His whole stock of English consisted in some half dozen words, which were so mispronounced, that, although God, as Sancho says, might know what he meant by them, it

was very certain that no one else could. Somebody at table inquired of him, in what regions of the earth the Malay language was spoken, and he replied, without the least hesitation, that it was the language of Calcutta, Pondicherry, &c. I ventured to suggest that the natives of Calcutta and Pondicherry were not Malays, and that I had heard from certain Englishmen, who had been in that remote part of the world, (which they seem to forget is a British province,) that at Calcutta people speak Hindoostanny. Nothing of the sort. He had been in the East, and knew all about it. This being the case, I began to mention two or three little odds and ends which I had picked up in my reading respecting India; but I soon found that, like the prophets of Mahommedanism, M. Levesque was no friend to dialectics, and preferred docility to argumentation. The awkward manner in which he eluded my questions, however, had excited the suspicions of his other hearers, who began to drop away, one after another; and I am convinced that his audience that evening, at his lecture on "White Magic," was thinner than it would have been if he had never mentioned the unlucky languages of England and the Malay peninsula. The little flea-hunting lady was, I now found, the wife of the magician, and a native of Geneva; and one night, I think, discover from her manner, that if her husband had been at least ten years younger, and a little handsomer, she would not on that account have found fault with the dispensations of Providence.

The breakfast at the table d'hôte at Argeutan, as at every other place where I stopped, was of exactly the same nature as their dinners; that is, soup, fish, meat of different kinds, eggs, salad, and a dessert, with cider: no potatoes, or any other vegetable but asparagus, at any meal. The bread was good, but made up into long loaves, like a huge Bologna sausage, as if it were sold, like silk or calico, by the ell.

From Argentan I set out, about eleven o'clock, for Alençon. The country continued to be of nearly the same character as that we had passed on the preceding day, except that there was more wood and greater inequality of surface. We never entered any forest, however, or saw any of those gigantic trees so frequently met with in England; all was upon a small scale,—the trees, the streams, and the hills. Apple and pear trees in blossom were every where visible, so that every step we took made it evident why cider is so cheap in Normandy. After travelling for some hours, we discovered, in the distance, the lofty spires of the cathedral church of Seez, and, on drawing nearer the town, observed the vast structure, called the seminary, whence swarms of young priests annually pour themselves forth upon the country.

The diligence, I learned, was to stop at least an hour at Seez, so that I had sufficient time to examine the cathedral and the town. The latter, however, may be despatched with a few words: It is a small place, not disagreeably situated, or ill built, where a house large enough for a moderately sized family, may be had for from eight to twelve pounds a-year, unfurnished. Provisions of every kind are said to be equally cheap; and, from the complexion of the inhabitants, I should judge it cannot be an unhealthy residence. A good education may also, it is said, be obtained here; but this I doubt, as the higher ranks of the population send their sons to the college at Alençon. The cathedral is a vast and splendid edifice, in a very chaste Gothic style, the choir being singularly beautiful, and the spires of the most light and graceful construction. The windows, moreover, are painted in the richest manner. The bishop's palace, which I had been informed was worth seeing, is merely a large modern house, with wings, with an extensive garden in front, which, on the present occasion, was covered with clothes like a washerwoman's. A middle-

aged man, who, I was told, was the bishop's secretary, was walking about in his black *soutane*, giving directions to the gardeners, and enjoying the fresh air. At a short distance to the south was a large gray structure, which, at first an abbey, had recently been converted into a manufactory; but the manufacturers had had no better luck than the monks, and some short time ago had been compelled to retire from business. I walked down to it, with the design of looking at the interior; but, though deserted and desolate, it was still shut up, and no porter was to be found at the door.

Returning to the inn, I consoled myself, for my disappointment, with Burgundy, and by conversing with the landlord on the prices of houses, provisions, &c. He told me, that, about four years ago, two English gentlemen arrived together at Seez, rich milords, who lived in great style, and spent a vast deal of money. They stayed four days, when one of them, growing tired of the place before the other, mounted his horse and rode off alone. When he was gone, the chambermaid went up, according to custom, to see if he had forgotten any little trifle, to make the beds, &c. and, in examining the drawers of a table or *escrutoire*, found the sum of three thousand francs in gold. The important intelligence was forthwith communicated by the honest wench to the landlord, and, by the equally honest landlord to the remaining milord, who received the money, in order, as he said, to return it to his friend; gave a note of acknowledgment for it to the landlord, and went out to take a walk, as usual, about the town. Meanwhile the gentleman, who had left behind the money, discovered his loss, turned about his horse's head, and returned in all haste to the city. Most men are brisk when going in search of a sum of money which they have lost, especially if, as may have been the case in this instance, it happens to be all they have. The gentle-

man spurred and whipped, and in all probability, swore a little, and at length arrived at Seez; but, unluckily for my story, the friend was as honest as either the chambermaid or the landlord, and, seeing the money loser driving into the town with despair in his looks, "Cheer up, my good fellow," said he, "here's your money!" and forthwith the purse was restored to its lawful owner. A reward of twenty francs was given to the chambermaid, and the landlord was told that a paragraph, narrating the circumstance, should be inserted in the English papers; "but," said the landlord, "although I have regularly inquired of every Englishman, who has stopped at my house, respecting the paragraph, I have never heard any tidings of it from that day to this!" The paragraph, however, may have been printed, reprinted, and repeated a thousand times, without coming to the knowledge of the few Englishmen who stop at Seez. In order to pay that gentleman's debt to M. Boissiere, landlord of La Crosse, I have told the story here, where, perhaps, it may have no better chance of coming to the knowledge of the parties concerned.

At St Saturnin, a small village near Seez, is the house in which the celebrated Charlotte Corday was born, in 1768. This extraordinary woman, who certainly deserves to be regarded among the most glorious of patriots, whether ancient or modern, was by birth a lady, though she rose superior to the prejudices which usually beset persons of her condition; and, instead of dissipating her time in those frivolous amusements, and still more frivolous studies, which generally consume away the lives of women, she devoted herself to high masculine studies, preferring historians and philosophers to the romances of Marivaux and Crebillon, the reading of which, upon a sofa, constituted the paradise of our effeminate Gray.*

* See Appendix, No. VI.

Here, while the above story was telling, we had a good smart shower; but it soon cleared up a little, and there was no more rain during the day. The clouds, however, hung dark and heavy over the country, and threw their vast shadows, like patches of premature night, upon the landscape. To mend the matter, there was not a soul in the diligence but myself and the conducteur, who was too hoarse to speak; so that I was left entirely to my own meditations, and the toothach, which happened on that day to be particularly active.

It was nearly eight o'clock when we arrived at Alençon, where I pitched my tent for the night, at the "Maure," the hotel where the diligence from Argentan stops. The moon was this evening too much obscured by clouds to allow of my seeing any thing of the city by its assistance; so, after supper, being disposed to be quite as shy as the moon, I went to bed, determined, with God's blessing, to make use of the morrow's sun instead.

CHAPTER XV.

Market-places and Churches of Alençon — M. Clogenson, editor of Voltaire's Works — Original Letters of Voltaire — Aneedote of Duolos — "Ecrasez l'Infame" — Environs of Alençon — Cotton Manufactories — Champ du Roi, the Place of Execution — The Public Slaughterhouse — House of the Baron Desgenettes — Hebert, Père du Chesne — Castle of the Duke of Alençon — Aneedote of Louis XI. — Punishment of an Adulterer — Palace of Justice — Corn Market — Theatre — College — Public Library — Portrait of Rabelais — Panoramic View — Diamond of Alençon.

AT five o'clock in the morning, I was "in harness," as Shakespeare says, and as busy as a spy in examining the physiognomy of Alençon. The weather,

unluckily, was not such as should have ushered in "the May," being somewhat overcast, and cold; but there was no rain. I had introductions to two gentlemen of the city, from M. Richomme of the Lycée of Caen, and M. Galeron of Falaise; but, as it was as yet too early to call upon them, I made the best of my way to the principal church. This, although there were fine painted windows, was altogether a very poor affair: but, early as it was, the building was filled with women—market-women, I imagine, and other country wenches, come to pray to the Virgin for customers.

There are several market-places at Alençon, as at Caeu; and one of them, where game, poultry, vegetables, &c. are sold, is the area before the principal church. Here the various articles are ranged in long lines, like streets, not promiscuously, but separately, the one consisting of game and poultry, the other of vegetables, &c; and a painted board, stuck upon a pole at the end of the market-place next the street, informs you what is to be found in each row.

Though it was still somewhat early for paying visits, I ventured to call upon M. Clogenson, one of the principal judges of the department, and titular librarian of the city. He had not yet risen, but sent down word that he would be with me in a moment. Meanwhile, instead of sitting down in the parlour, I walked out into his elegant gardens, which are laid out in the French style, and, like the greater number of gardens in Normandy, filled with the most beautiful tulips, which were now covered with dew, and beginning to open to the warmth of the morning. Here I was presently joined by the owner, a tall fine man, of polished and elegant manners, with whom, in half a minute, one may be perfectly at one's ease. We both apologized,—I for calling at so unseasonable an hour, and he for not being up,—and then began to converse on the object of my visit to Alençon.

He immediately said he would take me round the city himself, and shew me every thing in it which could be thought to possess any interest for a stranger; but first we adjourned to his own private library, where he possessed several curiosities of a literary kind. Of these, the most remarkable were several original letters of Voltaire, in his own handwriting; a portrait of the philosopher, on the back of a watch, executed for himself, and supposed to be an extremely exact likeness; a strip of crimson damask, torn from the fautenil which he used at the chateau of Prangins in Switzerland; and views—taken by Madame Clogenson, a woman of taste and ability—of his various residences. These views are to be lithographed by the lady herself, who has been at the pains to learn the process expressly for this purpose, and are intended to illustrate a work on the Travels of Voltaire, which M. Clogenson has long been preparing for publication. The letters are to be published in that superb edition of the philosopher's works upon which M. Clogenson, and several other literary men, have long been engaged. In running through two or three of these letters, which, though written when the author had reached a very advanced age, are in a strong, bold, masculine hand, I observed two or three palpable errors in orthography, which must, I imagine, have been the effect of affectation: for example, "Chretien" was written "Cretien," and "fait" "faiite," which no one can suppose could be from ignorance. On this subject M. Clogenson told me an anecdote, which may, perhaps, be very well known; but, as it was new to me, it may also be new to many others. Some person, who was no admirer of the great sophist, one day remarking to Duclos, secretary to the academy, that, although Voltaire had wit, and genius, and all that, he was ignorant of orthography. "Ah, ma foi," exclaimed Duclos, "tant pis pour l'orthographie!" He thought, that if it were the

question which must give way, Voltaire or the French language, the latter would have the worst of it; and he was perfectly right: for, although all Voltaire's innovations have not yet been adopted, his example has wrought a very remarkable change in the mode of spelling many French words. In most of these letters the celebrated phrase, "Ecrasez l'Infame," which has been very differently interpreted by different persons, occurs. The Abbé Barruel, and others of that stamp, will have it, that, by "l'Infame," Christianity is meant; but M. Clogenson, and most persons of sense and moderation in the present day, understand by it nothing more than "superstition" or "bigotry."

"Who shall decide, when doctors disagree?"

The phrase is there, in *all* the letters, I believe; but it is not for me to decide what was meant by it, though I hope the charitable interpretation is the true one. At all events, it can do no harm to be charitable.

When we had looked over these matters, and chatted a while about Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Pope, Hume, and Rousseau, we began to turn our thoughts to the antiquities and curiosities of the city,—a much less delightful subject than literature, but more germane to the object of my tour. After taking a peep at the various churches, not one of which has any thing in it, so far as I could see, in the least worthy of notice, we crossed the Sarthe by the new bridge, and took a turn in the suburbs on the road to Mamers and Bellesme. Here the forests, which appeared to fly before me, as the false waters of the desert fly before the travellers in Arabia, again appeared in the distance, covering the hills, and sweeping, in a dark, deep line, like a crescent, round half the horizon. At the foot of these forest hills were several chateaux, surrounded by trees, which looked well at a distance,

and, my companion assured me, would appear still better on a nearer approach. They belonged to his own personal friends. In the immediate outskirts of the city are several new houses, surrounded by gardens, which reminded me a good deal of the Alpha cottages in the neighbourhood of the Regent Park. In fact, on all sides, I saw proofs that Alençon is a flourishing and improving city; and, the clouds having now been swept away by a fresh wind, the sun poured his warm morning rays upon the scene, and threw so much brilliancy and beauty on every thing around, that it appeared to the greatest possible advantage.

In this quarter of the city are two great cotton manufactories, the larger of which belongs to M. Mercier, the liberal representative of the *département de la Sarthe*, in the Chamber of Deputies, and father-in-law to M. Clogenson. This we visited, and examined minutely; but the process of spinning, winding, weaving, &c. being as nearly as possible the same as in England, it is unnecessary to describe it. The steam engine was under the direction of a German, who put me very much in mind of some of those worshippers of Vulcan whom I had seen in the printing-office of Mr Bensley in Bolt Court. Four hundred persons are employed in this establishment, which occupies what was formerly a convent, together with several new constructions which have been added to the building. In the yard near the gateway, I saw an ancient tomb, with the form of a cross sculptured on it, in the pavement; but it has been considerably worn by the active steps of the sons and daughters of industry.

In returning from this point of the city towards the interior, we crossed the ancient bridge over the Sarthe, upon the middle of which you may stand with one foot in Mayenne and the other in Normandy. From thence we proceeded to the "Champ du Roi,"

the spot upon which Henry V. of England encamped when besieging Alençon, and where at present the public executions take place. I saw, on the south side of this field of death, the five broad stones upon which the frame of the guillotine stands when the law is taking vengeance for crimes; and certainly I did not feel very comfortable in looking upon the black mould which had so often been drenched with blood. The place is surrounded with houses, and, as executions appear not to be unfrequent, the inhabitants have ample opportunities of familiarizing themselves with the idea of death.

The portion of Alençon, in which the most ancient and curious houses are found, lies in a low, marshy tongue of land, between the rivers Sarthe and Briante, which have their confluence here. In this quarter of the city, also, there are several towers, gateways, and other remains of the old fortifications of the place, which an antiquary would be delighted to describe. In a portion of the ancient moat, near the principal gateway, is the slaughterhouse, which diffuses around a stench by no means inferior in pungency, I should think, to that which ascended from the lake of Avernus; for, although it might not perhaps suffocate the birds which might be disposed to fly over it, I should regard such birds as would come nearer to the place than they could help, as animals of very bad taste. It appears, however, that the authorities have had their nostrils offended by this infernal savour; for it is in contemplation to remove the nuisance, and erect a proper *abattois*,—which would be conferring a real benefit upon this handsome and agreeable city.

In strolling through the town, we passed by the house in which the celebrated Desgenettes, the physician who accompanied Napoleon to Egypt and Syria, was born;* and entered that in which Hebert,

* The following account of Valazé, another celebrated citizen of Alençon, is from the pen of a contemporary French author :

the famous *Père du Chesne*, a man as notorious for evil, as the former for good qualities, came into the world. Hebert's sister is still living; but she no longer occupies the house in which the revolutionary chief and she passed their childhood. We also saw the modest dwelling of Santa Rosa, the Spanish patriot, during his stay at Alençon, where General Torrijos, now living at Brampton, likewise spent some time, previous to his arrival in England. General Bonnel inhabits a very elegant mansion in this city; and General Cavalier, who commanded the regiment of the dromedaries, in Egypt, and was, if I remember

“ Valazé né à Alençon, le 23 Janvier, 1751, fut nommé à la presque unanimité des électeurs du Département de l'Orne, député à la Convention Nationale. Il y forma une liaison étroite avec les membres les plus distingués de cette députation de la Gironde, dont il devait partager l'infortune, et qu'ont rendu si diversement célèbres tant de talens, de vertus, d'erreurs, une intrepidité si héroïque, et un fin si funeste. Il debuta dans cette assemblée par une accusation véhémement contre la commune de Paris, sur laquelle il rejetoit toute la responsabilité du massacre des prisons. Mais ce fut surtout à la séance du 30 Mai, en cette journée decisive qui vit tomber la *Gironde* sous les coups du Jacobinisme, que Valazé deploya l'incébranable fermeté et la noble audace dont la nature l'avoit doué. Mais sa voix généreuse, ainsi que celles de ces amis, fut bientôt étouffée; et des le 2 Juin, sur la demande d'une horde des petitionnaires armés, convertie en motion par Marat, l'arrestation de Valazé fut décrétée, avec celles des autres Girondins. Valazé fut du nombre des proserits qui se resignèrent au coup qui les frappait; et loin d'aller soulever les départements, et provoquer la guerre civile, pour venger sa propre querelle, il attendit avec calme dans sa prison que ses accusateurs lui donnassent des juges. Traduit au tribunal révolutionnaire dans les premiers jours d'Octobre, 1793, il déclara qu'il s'honorait des relations qu'on lui imputait à crime. Cette franchise ne pouvait guère le sauver dans des circonstances si terribles: il fut condamné à mort avec ses collègues. Au moment où le président prononça l'arrêt de mort, un de ses compaguons d'infortune, le voyant chanceler et changer de couleur, lui dit, — ‘*Tu pâlis, Valazé?*’ ‘*Non,*’ repondit-il, ‘*Je meurs.*’ Il enait de se percer la cœur avec un poignard qu'il tenoit caché sous ses vêtemens.”

rightly, taken prisoner by Sir Robert Wilson, occupies an elegant villa in the vicinity.

Having sufficiently examined these smaller matters, we repaired to the castle, formerly the residence of the Dukes of Alençon, and now rapidly undergoing repairs and additions, in order to be transformed into the public prison for the department. The highest and most ancient of the towers is already the abode of criminals, and, while I was at Alençon, contained two capital offenders, who had received sentence of death; the one for cutting and maiming his wife, the other for arson; but it was suspected that the latter had been found guilty upon insufficient evidence. Except the above-mentioned tower, and a small portion of the façade, the castle is not ancient, having been in a great measure destroyed in 1585, by order of Henry IV. Louis XI. narrowly escaped death on paying a visit to the Duke of Alençon, at this castle. He was entering at the head of his suite through the principal door, when a large stone, detached from the battlements by a page who happened to be there playing with a girl, fell immediately in front of him. The tyrant saw that he had been within an inch of the grave; but, being unable to punish the youth for what he was compelled to consider an accident, he pretended to discover in it a miraculous interference of Providence, and, taking up the stone with much appearance of piety, carried it in procession to Mount St Michael beyond Avranches.

In another tower of this castle, the site of which is now occupied by the Palace of Justice, a gentleman, who had injured one of the Dukes in the most flagrant manner, was compelled to expiate his offence by perpetual imprisonment, after having been reduced by the enraged husband to the condition of Origen and Peter Abelard. What became of the Duchess I know not, but in all probability she was compelled to retire to a convent, where she could associate with

ladies for the most part as chaste as herself. It might perhaps be beneficial to public morals in France were the law to adopt the idea of the Duke of Alençon, unless indeed it should be feared that the whole country would by this means be entirely depopulated.

The great banqueting room of the castle was used, until within the last two years, as a hall of justice; and, as we passed through it, M. Clogenson pointed out to me the place where the judge used to sit while passing sentence, the position occupied by the advocates and the jury, and the seat where many hundred criminals had stood to hear their doom. They will in future be confined here, and condemned next door. The roof of the castle, which commands a fine view of the city, is composed of large slabs of Alençon granite, which, although recently put on, is already covered with moss and lichen, and has consequently an ancient appearance. Here we found two old rusty cannons, one of which had been attempted to be thrust down through the openings of the battlements, through which I myself narrowly escaped falling.

The Palace of Justice and the Hôtel de Ville are large modern structures in a respectable style of architecture. The pillars of the portico of the former are of granite, and of the Doric order, and remarkable for the vast blocks of which they are composed. The interior of the building is tastefully and conveniently laid out. The corn market is a large circular building in a heavy style of architecture, plain on the outside, but enclosing a large area, around which runs a broad piazza like that of Covent Garden, but considerably lower. In the centre the peasants bargain with each other, *sub divo*, in fine weather; but, when it rains, they retire under cover,

“Where Normans meet Normans, and cheat in the dark.”

From the market we went to the theatre, a neat

building, capable of containing at least eight hundred persons. Had it been judged necessary, accommodations for a much greater number might have been contrived; but it was thought, perhaps rightly, that Alençon would never be likely to possess a larger mass of play-goers. The boxes are elegantly fitted up, and, viewed from the stage, have a very cheerful appearance. The stage itself is large, and the machinery of the theatre appears to be abundant and in good condition. The *Café de la Comedie* adjoining is a very pretty establishment,—the best of the kind, I imagine, in all Alençon; and the little saloons of the theatre itself are extremely neat and tasteful.

The next place we visited was the college, a large and important establishment, situated upon the banks of the *Brianté*, and in the immediate vicinity of the castle, the battlements of which are visible from the principal court. Here, among the usual branches of instruction, the English language is taught; and though, of the three hundred and fifty boys who are here educated, few perhaps acquire our language, I conversed with one youth, a relation of M. Cløgenson, who spoke it with considerable correctness. Great attention appears to be bestowed in this college, as well as at the *Lycée* at Caen, upon the art of design, and I saw several little pieces executed by the pupils with much neatness and ability. Education is to be obtained at a cheap rate at Alençon, the whole annual expense of a youth at this establishment not exceeding £24,—a sum less by one-third than a similar education would cost at Caen. The college at present is under the direction of M. Frémy.

The public library, which occupies a part of the ancient church of the Jesuits, consists chiefly of modern books. Here, as at Falaise, they have a copy of the great work on Egypt, which appears to be a great deal more admired than read; and a very singular edition of *La Fontaine's Fables*, illustrated

with wood-cuts by Goddard, a native of Alençon. The greatest curiosity in the library, however, is a MS. of the History of the Normans, by Ordericus Vitalis, of very ancient date, but imperfect, both at the commencement and the end. Dr Dibdin should have gone on a pilgrimage to this manuscript, as it would have afforded him an excellent opportunity of being eloquent and pathetic on the shape of the initial letters, and the injury which mice or monks have inflicted upon us. There is likewise another manuscript, which antiquarians regard with a less profound reverence, containing a "History of the Popes," a "History of the Longobards," and other valuable matters of that sort; and yet there are some persons who prefer them to Thucydides or Tacitus. As one visits public libraries chiefly to look at the outside of books, the task is soon finished, and other things quickly come in for their share of attention. The walls are lined with very exquisite carving, in the highest state of preservation; and there are several portraits, of which the only one I regarded with any degree of interest, was that of Francis Rabelais. I am afraid it is not a good likeness, as I could read in it nothing of that laughing, gabbling, drinking, thoughtless genius which gave birth to Pantagruel and Grandgousier. Barry Cornwall, with whom I agree in setting a singularly high value upon portraits, could have made nothing of this: it was that of a hard-featured, snubby-nosed, uncommunicative old dog, who never could conceive the pretty etymology of the ancient name of Paris, or calculate the ells of drugget which went to the making of Garagantua's inexpressibles.

Leaving this mock Rabelais to the spiders, if they have any taste for bad portraits, we ascended the tower, and, on reaching the summit, enjoyed an extensive and superb view of Alençon, and its environs. The first object which caught my eye was Lornay,

the villa of that celebrated Marshal de Matignon, who, at the period of the massacre of St Bartholemew, saved the lives of the protestants of this city. To the orders he received from the court to cut the throats of those unfortunate people, he replied, that he was a soldier, not an executioner ; and exercised his authority in protecting them from their persecutors. For this, his name is dear to humanity. The villa is at present the property of M. Mercier, whom I have already mentioned so frequently. Other villas, but of less historical interest, studded the plain, through which the Sarthe and the Brianté flowed in mazy windings ; while the roads to Brittany, to Mamers and Belesone, to Caen and Mans, intersected the landscape, now losing themselves in small woods, and now emerging from them.

In the granite quarries of the neighbourhood, a species of crystal is found, to which the name of the "Alençon diamond" has been given. This substance sparkles beautifully, especially after a smart shower, in the gravel of the public walks, and in the walls of the houses ; and, when found of a certain size, is set in pins and brooches, like a precious stone. At my departure, M. Clouenson presented me with a very beautiful specimen of this diamond, cut for a pin, which I trust I shall long preserve, as a memorial of Alençon and the giver.

CHAPTER XVI.

Journey to Domfront—A Priest and a Commercial Traveller—The Butte de Chaumont—Scenery—Small Beautiful Valley—Pré en Pail, a small Town in Mayenne—Cattle Fair—The Phantom Horse—Arrival at Domfront—"The City of Misfortune"—General Deafness of the Inhabitants—Nothing to Eat—M. Hamard—Castle of Montgomeri—Subterranean Constructions—Desecrated Church—Poverty and Misery of the City.

I SET out in the diligence for Domfront about eleven o'clock, with letters of introduction from M. Clogenson, who came through the rain to see me set out. My companions were a priest, travelling from Mayenne to his parish, and a commercial traveller from Paris. I have frequently seen it remarked by English travellers, that the French are always immediately at their ease with each other in a stage coach, while our own countrymen are said to sit silent and sulky, unless drawn out, as it were, by force. My own experience does not warrant me in saying any thing of the kind. The French are very agreeable companions on a journey; but they very often require to be drawn out, as well as the English; and I have known three of them sit together, for five leagues, almost without speaking a word. I purposely left them to themselves, to see what they would do, though I knew it would not have been difficult to set their tongues in motion, by a few adroit questions. Another error which, I think, our countrymen sometimes fall into, is supposing the French excessively selfish and mean in their intercourse with strangers. I have not found them so,—I mean the better part of them; the low Norman villagers are overreaching and avaricious enough.

To return to my companions, however. On my right hand sat the priest, with his triangle hat, and in full canonicals. He was a short, jolly-looking person, with a homely, but agreeable, cast of countenance, and an eye which expressed frankness and good nature. On the other side was the Parisian traveller, —a tall, muscular man, with a laughing eye, and a most communicative look. They had travelled all the way from Mayenne together, but they made room for me between them; and, for a few minutes after my entry, were silent. As I hate to be placed in juxtaposition with a man, however, without knowing of what stuff he is made, I soon began to ask questions, to make remarks upon the country, the city we had just left, the city towards which we were going, &c; and, in a short time, we appeared to understand each other, and were upon the best footing in the world. The road lay at first through a plain country, though there were hills at a little distance, on both sides, and particularly towards the right, where the most remarkable eminence in Normandy, the *Butte de Chaumont*, of a blunt, conical form, towered to a considerable height. On our left, and beneath our feet, was the rich soil of Mayenne, which, as we advanced, swelled into beautiful hills, covered with bright green woods, and separated by valleys, which spread, and narrowed, and divided themselves into branches, in the most fantastic and picturesque manner. We at length came up to the course of the Mayenne, along which the road for some time lay, now commanding a view of its glittering waters in the woody valley below, and now making a sudden turn, and hiding it from our eyes. It was somewhere on this part of our road that I beheld the most lovely spot I have yet seen out of England. It was such a little valley as the superstitious of old times appropriated to the fairies. The upper part was a small round basin, green as the fresh young

grass of spring could make it, and sprinkled with the early wild flowers of the year, in all their beauty and fragrance. Small spreading trees, interspersed with aspens and poplars, whose leaves twinkled in the sun, clustered together, as it were, in small tufts, dotted its surface; and the turf, like the "green, smooth-shaven lawn," of Milton, sloped down, with inexpressible softness, to the silver waters of the Mayenne. Words, however, can give but a faint idea of a scene like this; and even the pencil, powerful as it is in reproducing the glories of the earth, would fail to catch all the charms of the spot, which partly arose out of accessories—remoteness from human dwellings, and the songs of the birds, and the perfumed breath of spring, which filled the bosom with delight, and thrilled like a magic influence through the frame. The postilion, as if chained by the force of beauty, stopped for a moment; and my companions, who appeared to be any thing but disciples of Dr Syntax, exclaimed simultaneously—"My God, how beautiful!"

On arriving at Pré en Pail, a small town in Mayenne, we lost our priest, who was curé of that place. The streets were filled with immense droves of cattle, brought, for the greater part, from Brittany, and purchased here by dealers from Caen, Alençon, and other cities of Normandy. I know not whether there were any Britons among the chapmen, but certainly the Mayenne peasants, who were here in great numbers, afforded the most striking contrast to those of Normandy that can possibly be imagined. These poor fellows, brown, withered, and dwarfed, to all appearance, by starvation, wear enormous slouched hats, like the mountaineers of Spain, loose trousers, coming half way down the leg, and short, brown sailor's jackets, between which and the upper part of the trousers, a large portion of the shirt is visible. The greater number of them had become

prematurely gray-headed, and wore such enormous whiskers, that their diminutive features were completely masked, and it appeared astonishing that nature should have attached so insignificant a visage to so portly a beard.

As the diligence remained here an hour, I believe, there was plenty of time for looking about us ; so the Parisian traveller—whose name I now knew as well as Sancho did that of Dapple—and myself betook ourselves to the church and the cattle market, the only things at Pré which appeared to be particularly worthy of notice—after the whiskers of its male inhabitants. The church is a neat modern structure, somewhat large, perhaps, for the town, and filled, like country churches in England, with large oaken pews, of very comfortable and respectable appearance. Upon descending the hill to the cattle market, we found that the business of the day was nearly over, though a few peasants, and what seemed to be the ghosts of some forty or fifty old cows and horses still lingered upon the spot. One poor fellow, who had an animal which he would fain have called a horse, for sale, particularly excited my compassion. He was himself tall, lean, and lank ; and his little white courser, which appeared, like its master, to have kept Lent far too conscientiously, stood by his side, a butt to the inhuman jokes of two or three pretended buyers. “What do you ask for your beast?” said one of these rascals, with a knowing grin. “Thirty-six francs,” replied the peasant. “Don’t you think,” inquired the other, “you might venture to take thirty-five?”—“Perhaps I might,” replied the man, “if it were offered me.”—“Get on his back,” said another, “just to see whether it really be able to bear the weight of a man ; for I have very strong doubts of it.”—“Ay, do,” added a third ; “but take care it does not drop in two.” The peasant put his beast in a proper position for mounting ; but, when

he tried to put his leg over it, the feeble animal staggered and gave way, and would have fallen to the earth if the design had been persisted in. The buyers now poured in their jokes thicker and faster, shouted out, "thirty-five francs!" laughed, winked, nodded, and, at length, drove the man from the ground with ridicule.

From this town we proceeded, through a thickly wooded and picturesque country, towards Domfront, where we arrived about half an hour after sunset. By the help of a letter from M. Clogenson, I discovered the best auberge in the place, the Hôtel de Bretagne; but supper was over, and the devil, I think, had been in the larder, for they informed us that they had nothing in the house but a piece of a cold leg of mutton, which had been served up that day for dinner. Though hunger, according to the old proverb, is the best sauce, it was not pungent enough, on this occasion, to reconcile us to Norman cold mutton; so, desiring them to provide us any thing else they pleased by our return, we went out to visit the donjon of the famous old castle of Montgommeri, by the light of the moon.

There is an old saying current respecting Domfront, which should make persons, who have any apprehensions of a halter, chary of visiting it:—

Domfront, ville de malheur !

Arrivé à midi, et pendu à un hour.

But M. Caillebotte, the merchant-historian of the city, informs us, that he could never succeed in discovering the origin of this proverb, which, therefore, like many other traditions, we must leave with the mists of time about it. Another particular respecting this ancient town is, that its inhabitants are all deaf, rendered so by the everlasting din of the hammers of the caldron-makers and smiths, by whom it is chiefly peopled. When a strange peasant arrives here, it is

a standing joke to send him to bawl at the door of a smith's shop, as Mathews did at the watchman's box, "What's o'clock?" when the enraged Vulcans, imagining their auricular infirmity is made the subject of sport, fling their hammers at him, and he is lucky if he escape with an unbroken head. When we arrived, the fires of the smithies had grown dim, and the echo only, as it were, of the infernal hammering, which tortures those who have ears by day, was heard. The streets are steep and narrow, and the houses high; so that the moon, however well disposed towards us, could do little for our assistance, until we issued out upon the ancient ramparts of the city, at the foot of the gray ruins of the castle. From hence we had a boundless view over the circumjacent plain. The last glimmer of sunset had not yet disappeared in the west, and the moonlight, mingling with the remainder of day, was sufficiently brilliant to allow us to enjoy the prospect. Winding round, at the foot of the donjon, I observed the base of the ancient wall, and remains of several towers, crumbling to decay, but partly concealing their old age, like a laureate bard, beneath the crowns of ivy which shaded their crest.

Returning to the Hôtel de Bretagne, we found that dinner was still a mile off; but the Maritornis of this Quixotic castle informed us, that, in the meanwhile, we might, if we pleased, amuse ourselves with a bottle of Burgundy, which she brought to us with her own fair hands. At length the dinner arrived,—lamb cutlets, bread, and asparagus from Granville, on the coast. Potatoes there were none in Domfront. Soup, also, that never-failing ingredient of a French dinner, made its appearance; but it would have burdened no man's conscience to have eaten it in Lent, for there was nothing in it but sorrel and butter. However, hunger and the Burgundy made the whole very tolerable. After this important affair was over,

we began to make inquiries respecting our dormitories, and found, to our astonishment, that there was but one, and that a quarter of a mile from the auberge. It being a still night, the wench took a lighted candle in her hand, and marched before us towards our quarters, which we found to be in a half-ruined house, dismal as a prison. Here, however, having, at all events, a bed apiece, we resolved to repose our "weariéd virtúe," like Milton's devils, after their fall; and, in a short time, were fast asleep, in the 'City of Misfortune.'

My companion was a sound sleeper, for, though the natives were stirring before cockcrow, he continued to slumber like an opium eater. About seven o'clock, I left him to his dreams, and went out to reconnoitre the Castle of Montgommeri. M. Hamard, the gentleman to whom I had carried a letter of introduction from M. Clogenson, I found at home, as was naturally to be expected, so early in the morning. He was a barrister, a man of literary taste, and, what was more, an enlightened liberal, and a great admirer of England and her institutions. He had projected a rural excursion on that day with his brother, but very readily put it off, to conduct me round the city and its environs. After breakfasting with him and Madame Hamard, a lady of the Roussel, or Russel, family, we took our way towards the castle. The remains of the donjon are merely a thick, gray wall, about forty feet high, faced with small stones, which are imbedded in mortar scarcely less hard than themselves, as the barbarians, who have endeavoured to loosen these stones, in order, perhaps, to erect a pig-sty with them, have found, to the cost of their mattocks and pickaxes. There are no means by which to ascend to the top of this wall at present; but, if a small flight of steps were carried to the top of it, as it might, with very little expense, thousands of persons would visit Domfront, were it merely to

enjoy one of the most extensive and superb views in Normandy. These ruins stand upon much loftier rocks than those of Falaise, though, in other respects, the positions are similar. At the foot of the rocks runs the small river Varennes, dashing down rapidly through its channel, and falling, with considerable noise, over various ledges, of different heights. The course of the Anté is from south to north; that of the Varennes the contrary. On the opposite side of the stream, rises a rocky promontory, strikingly resembling the heights of Noron, though somewhat more savage in its aspect, and surrounded by less luxuriant vegetation. On the northern side of the castle, beneath the wall of a private garden, I saw the entrance to the vast subterranean constructions, which, according to tradition, descended beneath the bed of the river, and, piercing the bowels of the opposite mountains, opened to the day among the rocky chasms which still yawn there, and give a kind of probability to the legend. By this exit, the garrison, when pressed to extremity, could escape by night, together with those gentle dames who, in the times of chivalry, were the never-failing companions of knights and squires. These military crypts, however, we were not permitted to enter; for, although the proprietor was present, and apparently disposed to be obliging, he made some silly excuse for not sending for the key, being more desirous that we should admire his young peas, and artichoke plants, than the castle vaults. This was the first time I encountered an incivility of this kind in Normandy, where, in general, every person, above the lowest, is complaisant to strangers; but Domfront is seldom visited by travellers, although its historical importance, and the singular beauty of its position, would well repay a journey of a few leagues.

Descending by a zig-zag path, like a sheep track, from the ruins of the castle, and crossing a frail

wooden bridge, we crept up between these rocks, until we reached a small cavern, inhabited, in former times, by a succession of hermits, whose lank bodies found their way through an opening through which a moderate-sized man could not, by any means, squeeze himself. The last of these wretches, having violated a young woman of Domfront, was pursued to his retreat in this cavern, where, when he could not be reached by those who were in search of him, he was shot, and left, I suppose, to be devoured by the wolves.

Following, for a short way, the course of the stream, we came to the ancient church, now converted into a wood-house, and rapidly falling to decay. The rain and snow of winter have found their way through the roof; the walls are covered with green damp; the ancient rude frescos of the chapels have mouldered away; the effigies of the founder, albeit in solid stone, has been flung into a small chapel, and defaced and mutilated. The altar, however, still appears to be regarded as holy, for its tawdry ornaments remain, and a few small wax tapers, half burned, are thrown upon it, by the devotion of the peasants.* I abhor to see any building, where God has been worshipped, however ignorantly, thus deserted and profaned, and I went away melancholy from the spot, to examine the remaining secular ruins, and the modern church of Domfront.

This church, erected in 1742-49, by the curé and inhabitants of the town, contains nothing remarkable, except a vast picture of the Crucifixion, some of the groups of which are not destitute of merit. Its clock

* "Au mois de Mars, 1749, on trouva dans la chapelle des douze apôtres de cette église, un trésor que les Anglais y avaient déposé, lorsque, en 1450, ils abandonnerent le pays. On se servit de bœufs et de chevaux pour l'arracher de la terre." Caillebotte, *Hist. de Domfront*, p. 59. What could be the nature of this treasure?

tower was shattered by lightning in 1806. A little to the east of the church, is a portion of the ancient city walls, in which is a tower, commanding an almost panoramic view of the town and its environs. The country on the side of Condé and Vire, is a succession of small hills and narrow valleys; towards Mayenne, a vast extent of forest; and, on the road to Mortain and Avranches, more broken, woody, and full of streams, than in any other direction.

There is very little life in Domfront. With the exception of the Sub-prefecture and the Gendarmerie, which are large, rather than handsome, buildings, there is no appearance of improvement or increase. The population is nearly at a stand-still, having increased only fifty-eight in one hundred and fifteen years. The streets are narrow and dirty, the houses old and ugly, and an air of poverty reigns throughout. The air, however, is said to be healthy, though very few persons reach the age of one hundred there,—a thing not uncommon in some parts of France. The position is too exposed for persons with delicate lungs. Provisions are cheap, and house rent is exceedingly moderate. It would, therefore, be a good place for those who visit the Continent for the sake of economy; though other places, with more advantages, are within a short distance,—such as Mortain and Avranches.

CHAPTER XVII.

No Public Vehicle—Depart on Horseback, with a Guide, through the Woods—Burning of Villages—Danger of Arrest—Mortain—Hôtel of Madame Mignon—Road to Avranches—The Abbé Goupon—Superb Scenery—Character of my Companion—Conversation on Literature and Politics—French and English Authors—Arrival at Avranches.

As no diligence leaves Domfront for any city but Alençon, I was compelled to hire a horse for Mortain; and M. Holfeld, the commercial traveller, moving in the same direction, took horse also, and accompanied me on my way. The young man, who was to bring back the horses, served us for a guide; and, for some leagues, a guide was no less necessary here than in the heart of Africa, for there were scores of little cross-roads, with few or no passengers on them; so that one might lose his way every half-hour. To add to the comfort of horse travellers, these roads seemed to have been the scene of the war of the giants against heaven; vast stones and fragments of rock being strewed over them in all directions, between which the little white charger upon which I was mounted, picked his way with as much difficulty as he could have encountered in Alp or Apennine. As good luck would have it, however, he was as active and willing as a barb, though by no means so easy to sit, and sometimes carried me on half a mile before my companion and the guide, until I came to a place like the Seven Dials, where it would have required the science of Hermes Trismegistus himself to choose the right road.

In spite of all these things, this was one of the most delightful rides that can be imagined. Now, the road ran beneath overarching trees, through which little streams, as it were, of sunshine, now and then fell upon me as I passed, while the cool breeze refreshed and invigorated me ; then it issued out upon a small green plain, dotted with pear or apple-trees in full blossom ; and anon ran along the banks of a small river, glittering and rippling in the sun ; or up the slope of a hill, sprinkled with groves and woods.

The whole of this neighbourhood, as well as two or three other districts, in various provinces of France, were, at this moment, in a state of the greatest excitement and alarm, caused by bands of miscreants, who usually concealed themselves in the woods by day, and, at night, issued forth and set fire to the houses and barns of the farmers. What their motives could be, has not yet been discovered. It could not be revenge ; for the rage was too general and indiscriminate in its operation to be accounted for in that way. It was at first supposed to be a contrivance of the insurance companies to terrify people into the habit of insuring their property ; and this suspicion was strengthened by the fact, that such houses as were insured, for a long while escaped destruction : but at length these were also fired and consumed as well as others. Then the suspicion fell upon a political party in the state, which, it was said, desired, by this means, to perplex and distress the ministry. Many believed, but more doubted this report ; and, for my own part, I cannot at all perceive the policy or wisdom of such a measure, let the views of that party have been what they may. The atrocities were committed in an obscure part of the kingdom ; the sufferers were, for the most part, humble individuals, more likely to sink under their calamities than to raise an outcry. However, houses, farm-yards, barns, &c. were set on fire in all directions, and the smoke of these conflagrations might, it was

said, be seen rising up like dusky pillars by day, while at night the flames threw a dismal light over the landscape. Nevertheless, I saw none of those fires, though I observed small knots of peasants who seemed to be on the watch. At Vire the gendarmes had been reinforced with detachments of regular troops, and more soldiers were still marching towards the spot. Strangers travelling through the country were arrested, and imprisoned, if found to be without passports; but I was allowed to pass, and, after crossing the most troubled district, reached Mortain late in the afternoon.

The approach to this town from Domfront is remarkably beautiful, the road ascending gradually the slope of a lofty hill, and the prospect, which is rich throughout, varying in the most delightful manner every moment. Long before we reached the town, we met parties of ladies and gentlemen upon the road, enjoying the prospect, and, in some cases, no doubt, listening "to the voice of love." My companion, as merry and as harebrained a Frenchman as ever bestrode nag,—excepting always the good people of Caen, who laugh three hundred and sixty-four days out of the year,—made no account whatever of the Sabbath, but moved on, singing joyous songs, which served as well as bells to keep up the spirits of the horses. When, however, we drew very near the town, the numbers of pretty girls and handsome women, elegantly and even richly dressed, who met us at every step, too powerfully attracted his attention to permit of his continuing his songs,—so that we entered the place in silence, gazing and admiring as we went along. Undoubtedly Mortain is a sweet place; for in no other town of Normandy, not even at Avranches, are so many fair faces and lovely forms to be seen. The town, moreover, is rich, and remarkably clean; and, I am told, that the very Parisians themselves pay less scrupulous attention to the affairs of

the toilet than the damsels of Mortain. The town enjoys a reputation for the beauty of its women, whose singular neatness and cleanliness deserve no less praise than their charms.

I have more than once remarked, that, where the air is peculiarly mild, and the landscape picturesque and smiling, the women are more beautiful than elsewhere; as in Devonshire, and some parts of Monmouthshire and Shropshire. The vicinity of Mortain is singularly lovely; particularly one small valley, of which I heard nothing until after my departure, where a rivulet of no great volume falls over rocks fifty feet high into a chasm, where it is lost to the eye.

The hotel at which we rested here was the best I met with during my journey; and I would recommend all travellers who admire neatness, civility, and good fare, to remain, while at Mortain, at the house of Madame Mignon, already celebrated throughout all the south of Normandy. As the house stands opposite the church, I had only a step to take to enjoy, while waiting for dinner, the sight of the sacred building. Here, as elsewhere, the ladies vindicated their sole right to the religion of the country; for I believe there was not a man to be seen in the church. The castle, which stands in the bottom of the valley below the town, as if to serve as a mark to the enemy on every surrounding height, is now reduced to one single tower, which does not seem to be very ancient: close to it is the corn-market, a large dismal looking building, not at all in keeping with the other features of the town.

On the brow of the hill above, which commands the whole place, is a very remarkable cluster of rocks, having, at a distance, the resemblance of a vast fortress. These I visited by moonlight, when they appeared, perhaps, still more to advantage than by day. Just as we had sat down to dinner, a person came in to demand the passports of such strangers as

might be at the inn, it being judged necessary, in the present troubled state of the district, to examine scrupulously the character and appearance of all travellers. Had I forgotten my document at Caen, I should have had the honour of being arrested as an incendiary,—as an English gentleman, a colonel in the army, had been, a few days before, at St Lo, where two gendarmes were quartered upon him until his passport arrived from Caen. Finding that I had the permission of the French government for dining at Mortain, my passport was returned, and I ate and drank, and moved about, without let or hinderance. Our companions at the dinner-table were officers of the army, young men of lively, gay dispositions, but sensible and well-informed, and singularly polite towards strangers.

Next morning, at five, I was already on the road, standing or walking to and fro, while the postilion harnessed the horses to the cabriolet which was to convey me to Avranches. The sun had not yet risen, and, although the sky was serene and cloudless, and promised a beautiful day, the air was cold. While I was waiting for the postilion, a priest, with his breviary under his arm, and a large cane in his hand, came up, wished me a good morning, and let me know that he was to be my travelling companion. I was extremely well pleased at this news, as there was an open, bland, sunny, and intellectual expression in his countenance, which, in a moment, prepossessed me in his favour, and caused me to expect a most agreeable journey. Our conversation at first turned upon Mortain and its vicinity. We could, from where we stood, command a superb view of the valley and the distant hills, and hear the tumbling and dashing of the river among the rocks below. Having to ascend a steep hill, we walked on before the vehicle, conversing most familiarly, and with a degree of warmth and enthusiasm very rarely indulged in, except with friends.

My companion, I soon found, was an *ultra* in politics, and, therefore, by no means averse to give vent to his opinions. But I hate political conversations, more especially with strangers, and contrived, without much difficulty, to introduce other topics,—the fine arts, eloquence, and literature in general. The abbé had followed, to the letter, the advice of Quintilian, “to read *much* rather than *many* books,” and was deeply versed in all the writings of Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, Fenelon, Racine, Molière, and, in one word, the principal authors of France; while I, who am a great eater of books, had looked through, rather than studied, many of those authors, and could have been glad to have shone, in my turn, by boasting of the merits of Shakespeare, Milton, Chaucer, Spenser, Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke; but he did not read English. On Milton, indeed, we had a very characteristic dialogue. The Abbé Delille, as most persons have heard, has written a translation of *Paradise Lost*, which my companion had always understood, he said, was very superior to the original. To me, who believe that, if Homer had translated Milton into Greek, he could scarcely have improved him, this was supremely laughable; and I endeavoured to make him understand, that there was as great a disparity between the English poet and his French representative, as between Hercules and the effeminate actor who struts about with a club and lion’s skin upon the stage. I do not think, however, that I succeeded. Not being acquainted with our language, he could, by no means, be made to comprehend the majesty and masculine vigour, the richness, pomp, and felicity of expression, the snavity, delicacy, and infinite tenderness of our great poet. Being aware that every man regards a long eulogy upon any thing with which he is not acquainted as a species of reproach, I suffered the conversation to slide back, of its own accord, to Racine, upon whose positive merits

we were, in general, agreed; though I could not, in conscience, consent to place him above Shakespeare, or Æschylus, or Sophocles, or even Corneille. The abbé insisted, with passionate eloquence, upon the singular originality and naturalness of the character of *Phædra*; upon the awfulness of her position; the sublimity of her thoughts, when contemplating the horrors of her fate; and the force of soul with which she cherishes, as it were, her despair. To have sought a parallel in any of Shakespeare's characters, would, for the reasons given above, have been absurd; but I reminded the abbé that a character, not very dissimilar, was to be found in Virgil, and in Euripides. *Dido* may, in fact, be regarded as, in some measure, the prototype of Racine's *Phædra*; though the peculiar nature of the latter's guilt, and the modern antique character of her reflections, confer upon her an air of originality at the expense of verisimilitude. My companion, in fact, remarked, approvingly, that the lady spoke like a Christian, and gave vent to sentiments which no person not acquainted with the Gospel, could be supposed to entertain; not perceiving, that to introduce a Christian heroine into events which occurred before the Trojan War, was to be guilty of as preposterous an anachronism, as that which Shakespeare hazards in *Troilus and Cressida*, where he makes Hector speak of Aristotle, and Pandarus of Winchester geese.

Of Fenelon, our opinions were much the same; except that he thought him inferior to Bossuet, and discovered something like licentiousness in the description of Calypso's island. In fact, the *Telemachus* is no longer permitted to be read in many French schools, where, at the same time, Horace's *Epodes*, and the Fourth Book of the *Æneid*, and many, I believe, of Martial's *Epigrams*, are conned over as lessons. Milton's loves of Adam and Eve would be regarded, by these modern puritans, as enough to

corrupt a whole nation; and, indeed, I know of no book which people so scrupulous can read with safety; so that it will be necessary, should this taste continue, to create a new literature on purpose for them, and send all the old authors to the cheesemongers.

Most men have a favourite author, upon whose character and merits they dwell with peculiar delight, and whose forms of thought and expression they, in some measure, imitate, both in conversation and writing. Bossuet was the favourite of my companion. He exalted him

Above all Greek, above all Roman fame;

and, while he enlarged upon the splendour of his eloquence, the richness of his imagery, the originality of his views, or repeated some of his most beautiful passages *ore rotundo*, and with all the enthusiasm of youthful admiration, I could almost fancy I had the great preacher by my side. My secular taste—which preferred the fiery energy that breathes through the political harangues of Demosthenes, and inspires us, in spite of ourselves, with all the fierce passions which animated the orator himself—appeared, I make no doubt, a little antiquated to the abbé; but we tolerated each other's preferences with great facility, as our tastes resembled each other in more points than they differed.

The road from Mortain to Avranches lies through a very beautiful country, and our remarks on books and authors were frequently interrupted by observations on the landscape around us. The abbé had a taste for every thing that was beautiful, whether in the ideal or material world; and described, with felicitous energy, the pleasures he enjoyed in his parish of Touchet, a lovely district near Mortain, surrounded by a simple people, and books, and romantic solitude. His neighbourhood, he said, was particularly full

of nightingales,—the birds which give most delight to all imaginative minds ; and it was one of his chief enjoyments to wander forth of an evening, when the moon was in the sky, listening to their delicious notes, and building castles in the air.

He was about thirty years of age, and had been seven years professor of rhetoric in the college of Coutances, and about twelve months in his parish. He endeavoured, I make no doubt, to throw as much romance and poetry as possible into his retirement ; but it appeared to me, that he had too much talent to be allowed to lie rusting, as it were, in that obscure solitude, for which he was much less fit than for the episcopal chair. He was now, he informed me, going upon a visit to his old friends at Coutances ; but, although he had promised to be there that evening, he should not, he said, be sorry were something to occur to keep him all night at Avranches, that we might continue to travel together to his journey's end. For my own part, I wished most heartily that the diligence might be full, or gone, or something of that sort ; and, for once, fortune was favourable to my desires, for, upon arriving at Avranches, we found that no vehicle would set out for Coutances until four o'clock next morning. " Well," said the abbé, smiling, and taking me by the hand, " we shall have our wish, and travel together yet another day : it is now ten o'clock ; we have the day before us ; what do you intend to do ? " — " I set out immediately," I replied, " for the Mont St Michel." — " That," said he, " will occupy several hours ; but, if you have a moment to spare on your return, you will find me at the curé's. If not, I shall meet you here to-morrow morning at four."

I should have before remarked, that, in approaching Avranches from Mortain, we discover the sea, and the pyramidal form of the Mont St Michel, rising up out of its waves, from a very great distance. On the

present occasion, the purity of the atmosphere was so great, that the point of St Malo, in Brittany, not often visible from so far inland, was distinctly discernible, stretching out like a vast white mole into the bright blue waters.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Excursion to Mont St Michel—Distant View of the Mount—The Rivers and Quicksands—Appearance of the Grève—Guide over the Sands—Obstinacy of a Norman Horse—Extraordinary nature of the Scenery—Arrival at the Mount—The Town—The Abbey—The Gendarmerie—Eight Hundred Felons—Splendid Prospect—The Tombelaine and its Legend—The Man in the Cage—City of Avranches—Legend of St Aubert's Skull—The Botanic Garden—Scenery.

BREAKFASTING in haste, I procured a horse and a guide, and set out for the mount, no less celebrated for its historical importance, than for the peculiarity of its position. As soon as I had emerged from the streets of Avranches, I saw before me a vast bay, now entirely deserted by the tide, and consisting partly of sand, partly of slime, intersected by the waters of several rivers, and covered, during spring tides, at high water. Two promontories, the one bluff and rocky, the other sandy and low, project, one on either hand, into the sea; and in the open space between these two points, are two small islands, from around which the sea ebbs at low water: one of them is a desert rock, called the Tombelaine, and the other the Mont St Michel. The space thus covered and deserted alternately by the sea is about eight square leagues, and is here called the Grève.

The Mont St Michel,* which is about the same height as the Great Pyramid of Egypt, and now stood, as that does, upon a vast plain of sand, which is here, however, skirted in its whole length by the sea, has a very striking and extraordinary aspect. It appeared, as the water was so close behind it, to rise out of the sea, upon the intense and dazzling blue of which its gray rocks and towers were relieved in a sharp and startling manner; and, as I descended lower and lower on the hill side, and drew near the beach, its pinnacles seemed to increase in height, and the picturesque effect was improved.

At length I emerged from the shady road upon the naked beach, and saw the ferryboat and the Charon that were to convey me and my charger over the first river. My Avranches guide here quitted me; but I had been told that the ferryman himself usually supplied his place in piloting strangers across the quicksands, which, owing to the shifting of the course of the rivers, are in constant change, and of the most dangerous character. Horses and their riders, venturing to select their own path over the sands, have been swallowed up together; and vessels, stranded here in a tempest, have in a short time sunk and disappeared entirely. The depth of what may perhaps be termed the unsolid soil, is hitherto unknown, though various attempts have been made to ascertain it. In one instance, a small mast, forty feet high, was fixed up in the sands, with a piece of granite of considerable weight upon the top of it; but mast, granite, and all, rapidly disappeared, leaving no trace behind. It is across several leagues of a beach of this nature, that one has to approach the Mont St Michel.

Though the rivers one has to traverse are neither very deep nor very broad, the mere fact of their rolling over a bed of dangerous quicksands, invests them with

* See Appendix, No. VII.

a kind of importance which they would otherwise undoubtedly not possess. The ferryman, as stupid a looking fellow as one could see in a summer's day, informed me, that, being that day left in charge of the boat, he could not himself be my guide, but that, by accompanying an old man who had just crossed, and was making the best of his way over the sands, I should find a small village, where there would be no difficulty in meeting with a guide. With this information, I put my Rosinante in motion, in order to overtake the old man, who was already at some distance upon the sands; but I had no sooner set out, than the Charon called after me, saying, that for three francs he would leave his boat, and go with me. "Very well, my man," I replied; "come along." But he requested me to wait a moment, until he should call his uncle, to superintend the concerns of the ferry. I consented, and, raising his voice to the highest pitch, he made himself heard in a distant cottage, whence two voices replied, that the uncle would not or could not come. He had previously taken care to inform me, that I had no time to lose, as the tide was already beginning to flow, and in the course of two hours would entirely surround the mount, and not only render all ingress or egress impossible, but moreover endanger the lives of such unhappy wights as it might overtake upon the sands. Notwithstanding this important piece of information, I sat patiently upon my horse, who, for his part, was in no hurry, and did not attempt to interrupt the dialogue between the ferryman and his friends in the cottage. Seeing that I made no offer to double the three francs, with a view to which the above mentioned manœuvre was put in practice, the honest man informed me candidly that he could not go with me, but that I might find my way very well over the sands, by following the old man, who had now diminished, by the effect of distance, to the size of a gull.

It was somewhat fortunate for me that the quicksands did not lie exactly in my way; for my charger, who had been always accustomed to trot after a guide, no sooner lost sight of the biped, than he became more obstinate than Balaam's ass, and stood still to enjoy the prospect. It was in vain that I spurred and whipped; he merely reared, and snorted, and kicked, without making the least attempt to advance. It had been exceedingly hot all the morning, and I began to suppose that the animal, being concerned on my account, was inclined to give me time to cool; so I took the hint, and sat quite at my ease, gazing about me. Patience, however, as some philosopher has said, is a virtue which is never so shy as when one is in need of it; and, as I looked at the mount, and the tide beyond it, mine began to desert me, and I again had recourse to the horsewhip—but still to no purpose; the obstinate animal merely groaned, which was as much as to say, “he'd be beat if he'd stir!” As this idea struck me, another, equally judicious, came along with it, which was, that in order to put the self-willed brute into motion, I must swear at it in French, which I immediately did; and the creature, as if refreshed and invigorated by the sound, darted off at once in the proper direction. Having now discovered the secret of perpetual motion, I used it unsparingly; and, with the aid of a few figures of speech of this kind, and an active application of the whip, I crossed the second stream, and found myself upon the other beach, on the point of Pontorson.

In a short time, I overtook the old peasant that had crossed the river with me, who directed me to proceed to the village near the point, where, by inquiring for Dequettes, the fisherman, I should find a safe and obliging guide. I did as I was advised, and found an active and civil young man about nineteen, who, taking a kind of harpoon in his hand, with which to try the sands, struck out upon the Grève, and led the way towards the mount.

The scene which now presented itself was singular and beautiful. On the right, the land, running out boldly into the sea, offered, with its rich verdure, a striking contrast to the pale yellow sands beneath. In front, the sea, blue, calm, waveless, and studded in the distance with a few white sails, glittering in the sun, ran in a straight line along the yellow plain, which was, moreover, intersected in various directions by numerous small rivers, whose shining waters looked like molten silver. To add to the effect of the landscape, silence the most absolute brooded over it, except when the scream of a seamew, wheeling about drowsily in the sunny air, broke upon the ear. The mount itself, with its ancient monastic towers, rearing their gray pinnacles towards heaven, in the midst of stillness and solitude, appeared to be formed by nature to be the abode of peace, and a soft and religious melancholy.

For some time I rode on musing, gazing delightedly at the scene, and recalling to mind the historical events which had taken place on those shores, and rendered them famous. The cannon of England had thundered on every side, and her banners had waved triumphantly from the towers before me. My reflections, however, were soon called off from these towering topics, being interrupted by the loud laugh of a party of soldiers and wagoners, who were regaling themselves with fresh air at the gate of the fortress.

Dismounting here, I entered the small town which clusters round the foot of the mount within the wall; and whatever romance might have taken lodging in my imagination, was quickly put to flight by the stink, and filth, and misery, which forced themselves upon my attention. I never beheld a more odious den. Leaving my horse and guide at a cabaret, I ascended the only street in the place, which, winding about the foot of the mountain, leads directly to the castle. Toiling up this abominable street, and several

long and very steep flights of steps, I at length reached the door, where, having rung, and waited for some time, I was admitted by a saucy gendarme, who demanded my business and my passport in the most insolent tone imaginable. I delivered up my passport; and while the rascal went to shew it to the man in office—governor, sub-governor, or some creature of that sort—I had to stand in the dismal passage, among a score or two of soldiers. In general, however, French soldiers are remarkably polite, and these, with the exception of the above individual, were so also. Even he, when he returned, had changed his tone; for, having learned from his superior that I was an Englishman, he came, with cap in hand, to conduct me round the building.

The first apartment, after the chapel, which is small, and by no means striking, into which I was led, was the ancient refectory, where there were some hundreds of criminals, condemned for several years to close imprisonment, or the galleys, weaving calico. I never in my life saw so many demoniacal faces together. All the evil passions, nourished by habit, and irritated, not subdued, by punishment, were there, clothed with flesh and blood, and still hungering fiercely after crime. Like Dante and his guide, we made our way through this hell in miniature, a hundred villains scowling at us as we passed, and, crossing several passages and small vaulted chambers, entered a still vaster chamber, called the Hall of the Knights, in which there was a still greater number of ruffians, and apparently of worse character than the others. Here a soldier stood with drawn sword at the door; and the gendarme walked before me, with his hand upon his own weapon, ready to cut down any villain who might set upon us. One countenance which I saw here I think I never shall forget. It was that of a man about forty years of age, small, pale, and haggard, but so expressive of wickedness, that it made

me shudder. The ruffian, who was doing something as we came in, just raised himself up to look at us, and, keeping the left eye nearly closed, threw so searching, venomous, malignant, and fiendlike a glance at us with the right, that it almost made me start. Nevertheless, the owner of this infernal countenance was a small, withered, weak man, whom one need not have feared to meet alone in a desert; but his look was like that of a scorpion, odious and deadly.

The apartment in which these miscreants were assembled, was a hall about one hundred feet long by thirty-five or forty in breadth, and was adorned with two rows of massy, antique pillars, resembling those which we find in Gothic churches. From hence we proceeded to the subterranean chapel, where are seen those prodigious columns upon which the weight of the whole building reposes. The scanty light, which glimmers among these enormous shafts, is just sufficient to discover their magnitude to the eye, and to enable one to find his way among them. Having crossed this chapel, we entered the quadrangular court, around which the cloisters, supported by small, graceful pillars, of the most delicate workmanship, extend. Here the monks used to walk in bad weather, contriving the next day's dinner, or imagining excuses for detaining some of the many pretty female pilgrims who resorted, under various pretences, to this celebrated monastery*. At present, it affords

* Sometimes serious quarrels took place between the pilgrims going to and returning from Mont St Michel. "L'occasion la plus ordinaire," says the Abbé Monet, "de ces disputes, était la manière dont ceux qui s'en retournaient de ce voyage (tout chamarrés de cocardes, de plumets, d'écharpes garnies de coquilles, et sous la conduite d'un roi, portant une légère couronne de plomb doré sur son chapeau) exigeaient de ceux qui y allaient *qu'ils fissent honneur au Grand Mont*. Les derniers, pour satisfaire à cet usage, devoient *saillir le bois*,—c'était le mot; c'est-à-dire, sauter, à pieds joints, et les deux mains derrière la tête, par dessus un bâton, placé horizontalement à différentes

shelter to the veterans and gendarmes who keep guard over the prisoners below.

From various portions of the monastery, we obtain admirable views of sea and shore ; but the most superb coup-d'œil is from a tall slender tower, which shoots up above almost every other portion of the building. Hence are seen the hills and coasts of Brittany, the sea, the sandy plain stretching inland, with the rivers meandering through it, and the long sweep of shore which encompasses the Grève, with Avranches, and its groves and gardens, in the back ground. Close at hand, and almost beneath one's feet, as it were, is the barren rock called the Tombelaine, which, though somewhat larger than the Mont St Michel, is not inhabited. Even this rock, however, was formerly fortified by the English ; and several remains of the old towers are still found among the thorns and briers with which it is at present overrun. Several fanciful derivations of the word Tombelaine are given by antiquaries, some imagining it to have been formed of the words *Tumba Beleni*, others, of *Tumba Helenæ* ; and in support of the latter etymology, the following legend is told :—Helen, daughter of Hoël, King of Brittany, was taken away, by fraud or violence, from her father's court, by a certain Spaniard, who, having

hauteurs, selon qu'ils répondaient à la question captieuse qu'on leur faisait. S'ils demandaient le *Grand-Mont*, ee bâton n'était mis que sur la pointe de deux pieds situés en regard l'un de l'autre, et dont les talons touchaient à terre, — ce qui ne rendait pas le saut fort difficile. Quand, au contraire, ils demandaient le *Petit-Mont*, en croyant avoir meilleur marché, le bâton en question était élevé jusque sur les épaules, et l'on sent bien que dans ce cas-là il y avait impossibilité de *saillir* ; d'où s'en suivaient, comme nécessairement, des scènes tragiques parmi une multitude confuse de gens grossiers, la plupart d'ailleurs échauffés par le vin. La galanterie, comme de raison, exemptait les femmes de cette redevance ; mais, pour les hommes, il n'y avait guère de composition à attendre sur cet article." — *L'Etat Ancien et de l'Etat Actuel de la Baie du Mont S. Michel*, p. 66, et note.

conducted her to this island, and compelled her to submit to his desires, seems to have deserted her there. The princess, overwhelmed with misfortune, pined away and died, and was buried by her nurse, who had accompanied her from Brittany.

At the Mont St Michel was preserved, until lately, the enormous wooden cage in which state prisoners were sometimes confined under the old regime.* The most unfortunate of the poor wretches who inhabited this cage was Dubourg, a Dutch editor of a newspaper. This man having, in the exercise of his duty, written something which offended the majesty of Louis XIV, or some one of his mistresses, was marked out by the magnanimous monarch for vengeance ; and the means which, according to tradition, he employed to effect his purpose was every way worthy of the royal miscreant. A villain was sent from Avranches to Holland, a neutral state, with instructions to worm himself into the friendship and confidence of Dubourg, and, in an unguarded moment, to lead him into the French territories, where a party of soldiers was kept perpetually in readiness to kidnap him and carry him off. For two years this modern Judas is said to have carried on the intrigue, at the end of which period he prevailed upon Dubourg to accompany him on a visit into France, when the soldiers seized upon their victim, and hurried him off to the Mont St Michel.

Confinement and solitude do not always kill. The Dutchman, accustomed perhaps to a life of indolence, existed twenty years in his cage, never enjoying the satisfaction of beholding "the human face divine," or of hearing the human voice, except when the individual entered who was charged with the duty of bringing him his provisions and cleaning his cell. Some

* See Appendix, No. VIII.

faint rays of light, just such as enable cats and owls to mouse, found their way into the dungeon, and, by their aid, Dubourg, whom accident or the humanity of his keeper, had put in possession of an old nail, and who inherited the passion of his countrymen for flowers, contrived to sculpture roses and other flowers upon the beams of his cage. Continual inaction, however, though it could not destroy life, brought on the gout, which rendered the poor wretch incapable of moving himself about from one side of the cage to the other; and he observed to his keeper, that the greatest misery he endured was inflicted by the rats, which came in droves, and gnawed away at his gouty legs, without his being able to move out of their reach or frighten them away.*

Having examined the principal objects of curiosity at the mount, and learning that the tide was rising rapidly on the Grève, I descended from the fortress, and, mounting my horse, set out on my return to Avranches. My guide informed me that I had staid somewhat too long; and in fact, the sea, flowing and foaming furiously over the vast plain of sand, quickly surrounded the mount, and was at our heels in a twinkling. However, the guide sprang off with that

* "On va eucore," says the Abbé Manet, "à l'aide d'une lanterne, dans les diverses souterrains du monastère, lesquels offrent un vrai labyrinthe de tours, de détours, et de descentes obscures. On y montre, entre autres, deux cachots de huit pieds en carré, où l'on prétend qu'on descendait jadis les criminels d'état, par une bouche, qui se refermait sur eux avec une trappe, et où l'on ne leur donnait jusqu'à la fin de leurs jours, pour toute nourriture, que du pain et de l'eau, quand on ne les faisait pas mourir de mort violent. On a conservé jusqu'à aujourd'hui à ces deux antres le nom de *Vade in pace*, ou d'*Oubliettes*; mais on ne trouve plus au fond de ces cavernes que les squelettes de quelques oiseaux de mer, qui s'y retirent en hiver, et qui apparemment y périssent de faim."—*L'Etat Ancien, &c. du Mont S. Michel*, p. 64.

long trot peculiar to fishermen, and was followed with great good will by the beast which had been so obstinate in the morning. We were joined in our retreat by a party of sportsmen, who appeared to have been shooting gulls upon the sands; but they could not keep up with the young fisherman, who stepped out like a Newmarket racer, and in a short time landed me safe at the Point of Pontorson, near the village of Courtils, where he resided.

On my return to Avranches, after a ride of eighteen miles, I set about examining the city and its environs. The most remarkable thing in the town is the skull of St Aubert, who flourished in the eighth century. This relic is preserved in a curious glass case, in the sacristy of the principal church, and is shewn to strangers only when they happen to inquire for it. St Aubert, it seems, had a vision, in which the archangel Michael appeared to him, commanding him to erect a monastery on the mount in the bay, hitherto known under the name of *Mons Jovés*. The dream, however, made no impression on the saint, though twice repeated, upon which the archangel became angry, and thrust his finger into the skull of the poor saint, but without killing him, which effectually terrified and reduced him to obedience. The monastery was erected,—the mount called after St Michael,—and, when the saint in due time died, the hole made by the archangel's finger was found in the skull. In reality, the hole, by the finger of whomsoever it may have been made, is in the skull, and seems to have been produced by the thrust of a stick or small iron instrument, but it must certainly have caused the death of the owner. The lower part of the skull is adorned with a broad silver fringe; and the whole apparatus has a very respectable appearance.

From the church where this relic is preserved, and which contains nothing else worth seeing, I went to

the botanic garden, more remarkable for the fine prospect which it commands than for the plants it contains. Near this spot are the episcopal gardens, surrounding the site of the ancient cathedral, now marked merely by a large wooden crucifix. On this side of the city are extensive remains of the ancient fortifications, among which is the castle, visible from a vast distance, and at present surmounted by a telegraph. In some of these walls cannon balls, half sunk into the stone, are said to be visible,—though, for my own part, I could see none of them,—and are looked upon as monuments of the fierce rage of our English armies, which more than once swept like a torrent over the whole of this country, devastating and destroying as they moved. At the foot of these ruins runs one of the most agreeable promenades of the city, on which, in fine weather, the tasteful portion of the inhabitants may be seen enjoying one of the most charming prospects in Normandy. Beneath, in the valley, the small river Sée meanders through groves and meadows, and finds its way, through a succession of smiling scenes, to the sea. Here and there, among the green woods, a gay chateau or slender church spire is discovered, together with small villages, hamlets, and farm-houses.

The churches, the college, the public library, however important or useful to the inhabitants, possess but little attractions for the eye of a stranger, which here escapes, as it were, from the artificial to admire the natural. The site of Avranches is truly beautiful, raised upon a gentle hill, and commanding on all sides the most rich, varied, and extensive prospects. When I visited it, the weather, together with the charms of the season, was sufficient to confer an interest even upon inferior landscapes; but there was an air of softness diffused over the scenery, a certain romantic delicacy, which one might in vain seek elsewhere in Normandy,—if we except, perhaps,

the picturesque and smiling environs of Mortain. Owing to the nature of its position, and likewise to the habits of the people, Avranches is a clean place; and, although it has neither commerce nor trade, every year sees its extent enlarged, and its streets beautified. A great number of English,—as many, it is asserted, as four hundred,—reside here, on account of the beauty of the site as well as the cheapness of provisions; and they are said to live in great harmony with the inhabitants, by whom they are highly respected. Almost all the pretty little villas in the neighbourhood are possessed by the English, who, I have observed, invariably select, in every country, the most agreeable residences to be found, and never fail to improve and embellish them. This, moreover, is the opinion of the French themselves, who, if they have a house or garden to let, prefer an English to a French tenant. Many of our countrymen have even purchased estates in the neighbourhood of Avranches; and in some parts of Normandy, it is said, that several persons, induced by the charms of the place, have naturalized themselves, and become French citizens.

CHAPTER XIX.

Departure from Avranches—Innumerable Nightingales—Battles of the Vendéans—Road to Granville—Exquisite View of the Sea—Arrival at Granville—The Quay and the Shipping—The Rocks—The Church—Holy Water and Prayer—Obliging and Gentlemanly Conducteur—Oyster Merchant from Cherbourg—City and Cathedral of Coutances—Incomparable View—St Lo—Return to Caen.

AT four o'clock in the morning, just as the dawn was diffusing its dubious light over the sky, we left Avranches for Granville. The small groves and thickets through which the river Sée winds towards the ocean, were absolutely swarming with nightingales, which perched themselves upon the young trees that hung over the roadside, and sang divinely. It was one of the most delicious mornings of the whole spring. The sky was without a cloud,—the perfume of the young flowers filled the atmosphere,—and, excepting the rumbling of our own vehicle, there was not a sound to be heard but the voices of the birds. The abbé—who had joined me at the hotel according to promise—looked about him and listened in silence; and it was not until we had issued forth from the delightful woods of Avranches that we properly began to converse.

I could not have travelled with a more useful or agreeable companion: he had passed his schoolboy days at Avranches, and knew every inch of the ground over which we were travelling. Here he remembered having joined with his companions in robbing an orchard,—there he had spent hours and days, like other mischievous boys, in searching for birds' nests,—and on another spot he had, at a later

period, sat for hours pondering over his Virgil or his Racine. Every one loves at times thus to dig backward, as it were, into the mines of memory; and the history of another man's experience becomes truly delightful to us by recalling our own.

From these topics, agreeable as they were to us both, we slid gradually to others. This part of the country had been the scene of some of the exploits of the Vendean army, previously and subsequently to the siege of Granville; and my companion appeared to be minutely acquainted with the history of all their movements. He pointed out to me, as we moved along, the various positions they had occupied, and described, with almost military ardour and enthusiasm, their gallant bearing and untutored prowess. My sympathies were for the other party—the party of freedom and manhood—but I could not refuse to admire the valour and devotion which those men displayed in what they considered the good cause. Still, however, the Vendean were, in my eyes, the enemies of their country; and the reverses they had experienced upon the very spot over which we were passing delighted me, as they were so many proofs that France deserves all the liberty she enjoys, or may yet, by the blessing of Providence, acquire.

The road, which was almost parallel with the shore, commands in many parts a magnificent view of the sea, which on this day was as unruffled as a lake, and most beautifully blue. Numbers of small skiffs from the neighbouring fishing villages, and from Jersey, Guernsey, Sark, and the other islands of the Norman archipelago, were moving with their white sails over its smooth surface, and reminded me of that mimic sea which slumbers on the canvass of Guido in his picture of Hippomenes and Atalanta.

Having crossed the small river Bosq, we arrived at Granville, and immediately proceeded to view the quay, the mole, and the rocks on the north of the

town, the only things for which this place is at all remarkable. The harbour of Granville, as M. La-couldre-la-Bretonnière observes, is protected from the north wind by a rocky point called the Roquat, which advances about four cables' length into the sea towards the west. The bed of the harbour is dry at low water, but has from eighteen to twenty-two feet of water when the tide is in, as was the case when we were there. The largest vessel then in the port was a brig; but there were numerous small craft, and their crews were either actively employed in trimming the sails for departure, or loolling on the bulwarks, staring listlessly at the shore. The old breakwater, as it may properly be termed, formed of loose stones, protects vessels from the west wind, and the new mole, a piece of regular masonry, equally protects them from the southwest, while they have the solid shore on the east.*

From the quay, where there was considerable life and movement, we ascended the rock, passing by some insignificant fortifications erected by Napoleon. From hence we had a noble view of the sea, studded in the distance with small islands, and in the foreground with submerged rocks, over which the waves were now breaking in snowy foam. The face of the rock is nearly perpendicular, but the height is not great; and although, considering the general character of the coast of Normandy, this little promontory may be regarded as remarkable enough, I cannot conceive any thing more absurd than to call this place "a Gibraltar in miniature," as Dr Dibdin does. If the other portions of the view had not been totally dissimilar, it would rather have put me in mind of the Hoe at Plymouth; and certainly it affords the inhabitants of Granville as pleasant a summer walk as that other little hill does the people of Plymouth.

* See Appendix, No. IX.

The grass, which was thickly sprinkled with daisies, was short and peculiarly fine, as it is found on Grongar and other conical hills in Wales. The barracks, which are situated on this rock, are large and well built, and improve the look of the town.

In descending towards the town, we passed by the church, and I inquired of the abbé if he would go in with me. "Willingly," said he. When we entered, the priest was reading the morning service, and there was a considerable number of persons in the church. The abbé dipped his fingers in the holy water, and turning round, extended his hand towards me, dripping with the blessed element, as if he were desirous that I should join him in the performance of the ceremony. I held out my hand; he affectionately sprinkled a few drops on the points of my fingers, which I raised, as he did, to the forehead, where I instinctively made, I believe, the sign of the cross. There was nothing in the action, I trust, of which a protestant, under similar circumstances, ought to be ashamed. "When you are in a foreign country," says Sophocles, "respect the gods and manners of that country;" and it is from this motive that I have invariably behaved respectfully towards catholicism in France, just as I would towards mahommedanism in Turkey, or brahminism in Hindostan. The interior of the church, somewhat more sombre than French churches in general, was, on that account, more to my taste. We walked round the whole building, looking at the small neat chapels filled with images, tapers, &c. as elsewhere, and then made our exit at another door. As we were going out, my companion whispered to me,—“Let us say a short prayer before we go.”—“With all my heart,” I replied; and, at the word, we kneeled down together and prayed—no doubt to the same God.

When we were in the streets, our conversation on secular matters was resumed. We descended a long

flight of steps, through an archway, beneath one of the principal towers of the fort, and found ourselves in the midst of the town. Here we met with our obliging conducteur, M. Macauliffe, a young man of Irish extraction, and of habits and manners very much above his situation. He informed us that we had yet sufficient time for breakfast, which we took in the first auberge we could see, and then mounted, and proceeded on our way to Coutances.

The road still lay through a rich picturesque country, covered with apple-trees in blossom, and intersected by several small rivers, of which I could not learn the names, on whose green banks Izaak Walton might have angled to his heart's content, without disturbance from any human being. I was surprised to learn, that the appletrees blossom somewhat later here than in the neighbourhood of Caen,—the cause of this backwardness being, in all probability, the proximity of the sea, and the more hilly nature of the country.

At Granville our company had been increased, if not improved, by the addition of an oyster merchant from Cherbourg, who discoursed most emphatically of the price of fish, more especially of those in which he himself dealt. From him I learned that the neighbourhood of Cherbourg, and, in general, the whole northern coast of the promontory of the Cotentin, is unhealthy; that strangers suffer greatly from the nature of the air; and that no curé appointed from another part of the country to a living in a certain parish near the city, had ever been known, at least for the last quarter of a century, to survive above six years.

About nine o'clock we passed a Roman encampment, on the left of the road, in a remarkably high state of preservation. The site had been chosen with great judgment, the approaches to the spot being steep and difficult; but it was not a place in which a

large army could have encamped. Soon after, we discovered, from an eminence, the slender, graceful spires of the cathedral of Coutances, glittering in the golden rays of the sun, and pointing, with pregnant meaning, towards Heaven.

At length we crossed the little river Sienne, and, ascending a prodigiously steep hill, found ourselves in Coutances, the capital of the Cotentin. Here my companion, the abbé, quitted me at the entrance to the city, after giving me a pressing invitation to pay him a visit at his presbytère at Touchet. He had many friends at Coutances, upon some of whom I might, perhaps, have called with him, had there been time; but I had several things to see, and the moments of my stay were numbered.

Language seldom fails one so completely as when one has to describe a beautiful or sublime piece of architecture. We in vain have recourse to technical terms: these convey but imperfect ideas, even to the connoisseur; and to the generality, they are mere barbarisms. If we avoid these, and rely upon the ordinary resources of language, we become vague, but we still remain intelligible. It is preferable, therefore, to adhere to the latter course.

The most remarkable portion of the church is the towers, which, pierced by long slender windows, rise to a great height, and are surmounted by prodigiously lofty spires. The pinnacles, which crown the towers, and cluster, as it were, round the base of the spires, are wrought in a kind of fret-work of gray stone, of the most delicate and finished workmanship; and these, with the windows, which are extraordinarily long and narrow, and ornamented in the most exquisite style, succeed in conferring upon this portion of the building a degree of perfection and beauty of which I never should have thought the Gothic style of architecture susceptible. The central tower, somewhat more lofty than these, is in perfect harmony

with them and the remainder of the building. The interior, though less admired by antiquarians, appeared no less beautiful to me. The tall windows, the rich clustered pillars, the little rows of arcades, running along the nave of the building, the graceful balustrades of the narrow galleries which surround the whole, and the tasteful altar,—all concurred to give this church the preference, in my estimation, over all the others I had ever seen. In fact, I question whether any thing, in sacred architecture, except the Parthenon, in all its glory, could have more powerfully seized upon my imagination.

There was some difficulty in finding the individual who possessed the privilege of shewing the tower, and the view of the environs which it commands; but at length I was successful, and ascended the winding stairs with my female guide before me. The girl was perfectly familiar with the building and its incomparable beauties, and exercised all the rights of familiarity by looking upon the whole with the most complete indifference, though she knew the things which strangers were accustomed to admire, and pointed them out to me. When we reach a certain elevation, the passage turns round, and leads by a narrow gallery, or corridor along the side of the nave and choir, whence the most excellent view of the interior of the church is obtained. We then pass over the roof of a portion of the choir, as in ascending the tower of the Abbey aux Dames at Caen, and, after toiling round and round the tower for several minutes, at length emerge upon the roof.

Here I enjoyed a view which it is much easier to admire than describe. Beneath my feet was the city, constructed for the most part of a bluish gray stone, and affording the most striking contrast with the rich verdure of the fields which surround it. A succession of green meadows, sprinkled with apple-trees in blossom, and traversed by the silver waters of

the Sienne, led to the edge of the sea, whose blue and peaceful waters appeared like a reflection of the sky in a mirror. In the extreme distance, towards the southwest, the shores of the bay of Concale in Brittany, and the promontory of St Malo, stretched out like a vast white mole into the ocean; and, here and there, small rocky isles rose like pyramids of gray mist among the waves; while, in the foreground, the lazy wind dreamingly impelled a few small sails along the shore. Turning towards the north, I beheld the variegated landscape of the Cotentin,—hills, valleys, woods, villages, churches, and chateaux, smiling in the golden sunshine of May, and rife with historical associations. Here St Evremont was born; yonder the Abbé Saint Pierre; and, on various spots, within the circumference of the horizon, Geoffrey and Robert Guiscard, and Tancred and Roger, renowned in the annals of chivalry, and Lebrun, Duke of Placentia, and Consul of France. Towards the eastern extremity of the city, are the ruins of the ancient aqueduct, which, up to the beginning of the eighteenth century, supplied Coutances with water.*

Excepting its position, and its cathedral, there is nothing very remarkable at Coutances; which, on descending from the tower, I quitted for St Lo. This small city, which I reached early in the afternoon, occupies a charming site on the eastern banks of the Vire, which runs in a shallow but rapid stream beneath the foot, as it were, of the town. The public promenade commands a singularly fine prospect of the valley of the Vire, and the hills which command it; and, owing to the elevation of its position, as much, perhaps, as to the taste of its inhabitants, the streets are clean, and present a remarkably lively appearance. The church is large, and built in a noble

* DIBBIN, vol. ii. p. 192.

style of architecture ; but I had just seen the cathedral of Coutances, and had no admiration left for any thing inferior. This town, however, must be a charming residence for strangers ; the environs being beautiful, the situation healthy, and provisions cheap. From St Lo I returned through Bayeux to Caen.

CHAPTER XX.

College Royale, or Lycée, of Caen — Drawings — Playground — Chapel — Refectory — History of the University — Picture Gallery of Caen — Portrait of James I, by Rubens — Good Friday — Service in the Different Churches — Want of Devotion in the Worshippers — Picture of William the Conqueror — Unhealthy Spring — Profusion of Flowers — Rearing of Bees — Croaking of Frogs — Tinkling Sound produced by Toads.

THE business of education is at present pursued with great spirit and intelligence in Normandy. The colleges, generally, are well regulated, and the professors men of learning and ability. The College Royale of Caen, more generally termed the Lycée, and formerly the University, enjoys, as it has always done, a great reputation in France, and counts among its pupils from thirty to forty English youths. In my visit to this establishment I was accompanied by an able and intelligent priest, together with one of the professors, a young man no less distinguished for the simplicity and modesty of his character than for his acquirements.

While we were waiting in the parlour for the gentleman who had kindly undertaken to conduct us through the building, I employed myself in examining

the drawings of the pupils which had obtained the various prizes, and were suspended against the wall in this public apartment, in order at once to gratify the ambition of those who had been successful, and to excite the emulation of others. I observed with pleasure the name of Burke at the foot of a very pretty landscape. There were two drawings, however, the one from an antique statue of the Muse Terpsichore, playing upon the lyre, the other of a female head from Girodet's picture of the Deluge, which exhibited so much ease and vigour of touch, that I should certainly argue highly of the lads who produced them. Throughout France great attention is paid to the art of design, and, in general, the proficiency of the pupils appears to be equal to the pains of the masters.

The parlour where these drawings were placed is a spacious and lofty apartment, destined for the reception of parents who visit the children, and any other persons who have business at the college. But if the room be good, the small quantity of furniture which you find there is in excellent contrast with it, and causes you to imagine yourself in the parlour of a gaol. A few wretched chairs of all patterns, not worth a shilling apiece, huddled together here and there in the different corners of the apartment, constitute the whole of this furniture.

From the windows of the parlour we had a view of the play-ground, where the boys were then at their exercises; but, as in the Palæstra of ancient Greece, strangers are not admitted to mingle among the lads. The exercises were much the same as are practised at public schools in England,—leaping with a pole, ball, crickets, &c. In contemplating the forms and features of the boys then engaged in their gymnastic sports, I was particularly struck by the extraordinary want of dignity observable in their countenances. They were nearly all sufficiently plump, healthy,

and robust; but I could not discover a single face, remarkable for that juvenile beauty, softness, and grace, of which you might find a hundred examples at Harrow, or any other great school in England, and which might make you doubt whether the features were masculine or feminine. Neither could I perceive any thing of those indescribable indications of intellectuality, which, even in the dawn of life, foretell the glory of its noon.

From the parlour we proceeded to view as much of the other portions of the building as were visible on that day. The Lycée forms three sides of a large quadrangle, of which the church of St Etienne constitutes the fourth side. Around the interior of this quadrangle runs a lofty piazza, like that of Covent Garden, and resembling what is found in almost every other monastic or conventual building. Here the Benedictine monks, to whom the abbey formerly belonged, used to walk to and fro in rainy weather, meditating some of those erndite works which their congregation bestowed upon the world. In one corner of the quadrangle is the chapel, into which we could not, on the present occasion, be admitted, because two or three of the lads were there with a priest, preparing for confession. We therefore proceeded to the refectory,—a magnificent room, at least seventy feet long, and proportionably wide and lofty. The walls, to the height of at least twelve feet from the ground, were lined with oak paneling, ornamented at the top with beautiful carved work, and covered with a fine shining varnish. Above the paneling there were numerous pictures, of which some were ancient,—and they seemed to possess no inconsiderable merit; but the light was too scanty to permit of our scrutinizing them very closely. The piece which occupied most space represented the Conquest of England by the Normans,—an event which appears to be as fresh in every Norman's mind as if it had

happened yesterday. As far as I could judge, however, the size of this picture was its principal merit. On one side of the room a small pulpit is fixed up against the wall, from which a person reads to the boys, — as formerly, I suppose, to the monks, — while they are at dinner; though, as far as utility is concerned, he might as well whistle a German waltz to them, for hunger is no lover of homilies. The excuse for this piece of pedantic absurdity is, that it preserves silence among the boys; but a good dinner and a good appetite would do that much better. Two long tables, one on each side, extend from one end of the apartment to the other, and stand upon two slips of boarded floor, raised about six inches above the stone pavement, which runs along through the centre, and is formed of diamond-shaped stones of various colours. The tables were covered ready for dinner. The chambers of the lads are clean and neat; and a watchman perambulates the building all night, to preserve order and prevent accidents. The whole annual expense of a boy's education at this place is thirty-two pounds.

The university of Caen, now represented by the *Lycée*, or *College Royale*, was founded between the years 1417 and 1422, by Henry V. of England, who at that period was master of this capital of Lower Normandy. The first professors of the university, moreover, were English; but the historians of the city, from enmity towards their foreign instructors, have neglected to record either their names or their merits. Henry VI, by letters patent, issued at Ronen, in 1431, increased the number of professorships. The university having been the creation of the civil authorities, it was thought necessary, in 1437, to apply, with a bribe of 14,000 livres modern money, to the Pope, to obtain his apostolical confirmation. The grand bailli of Caen having been appointed by the King guardian of the royal privileges of the

university, the Pope, to be even with his majesty, named the bishop of Bayeux to the chancellorship, while the bishops of Lisieux and Contances were constituted guardians of the apostolical privileges which his holiness had granted.

Under the auspices of the English, the university continued to flourish, until, in 1450, Caen was retaken by the French, when the privileges and importance of this institution were abridged. Nevertheless, the Caënnais of those days were but too happy, according to the Abbé de la Rue, to have their privileges thus clipped by their "legitimate king;" and, from aversion to a more dignified condition, or from that spirit of adulation by which the vulgar are always actuated, or, perhaps, in order to ward off the suspicion of having been attached to their English masters, the ingenious Cadomenses proposed the burning of the charter which had been granted them by the English sovereign. The historian of Caen is of opinion, however, that this was carrying their ingratitude a little too far.

The character of the other places of education in Caen has nothing to distinguish it from that of other institutions of the kind. It is exceedingly curious, however, to observe the boys breaking out from one of these schools in winter, each little shivering urchin, instead of books or a satchel, bearing in his hand the miniature chanfferette, which prevents him from falling a sacrifice to the doctrine of human perfectibility. In many of these schools there is never any fire, even in the severest weather; but each of the young philosophers pays his devotions to Mercury with Vulcan under his feet. The Hindoos, and other Asiatics, who can sit all the year round in shady gardens or refreshing groves, while studying, and commence their writing lessons with their finger on the warm sand, have greatly the advantage over us in this particular. There can be no doubt, I think,

that unless schools be thoroughly well warmed, we might as well make one holyday of the whole winter. In large schools, the number of the boys may, perhaps, keep up a sufficient warmth; but where the scholars are few, the fires should be great: to expose children to personal discomfort is doubly cruel and injurious.

The picture gallery of Caen, which some authors have treated with mere contempt, contains a few ancient paintings of great merit, among a considerable number of very poor modern performances. There is no catalogue; and the conservator, M. Holouis, who might supply the place of one, is not always there. One is therefore left to guess the names of the artists and the subjects of the pieces. The first thing which struck me was a *Mater Dolorosa*, said by some to be a copy of Carlo Dolce, but which I should rather take to be an able imitation. It has all the pathos and tenderness of that great master, but the exquisite delicacy of touch, for which his pencil was distinguished, is wanting. The head is enveloped, or rather shaded, as usual, by the folds of a large blue mantle, which fall down in large masses around the figure. The face, though far from being beautiful, is singularly expressive of that deep but silent sorrow which the loss of a beloved child causes in the maternal bosom; the eyes, swollen and red with weeping, are turned with a sort of pious reproachfulness towards heaven; one "big round tear," the last of a burst of grief, is on the pale cheek, while the clasped hands and heaving bosom bespeak the struggles and the agony concealed in the depths of the soul.

On the opposite side of the room is a picture forming the most complete contrast with the above,—*"Sampson delivered to the Philistines;"* which it is very clear must be of the Dutch school, from the characteristic grossness of the design, and the minute

finish of the execution. Delilah, a lady of very ample dimensions, and sinister aspect, is represented reclining almost naked upon a couch, with the huge scissors in her hand, with which she has just shorn the Israelitish hero of his magical locks. Her coarse form and meretricious countenance appear alive with delight at the success of her treachery; while Sampson, like a lion caught in the toils, turning round towards the cowardly ruffians who are encompassing him, scowls at them with a mixture of amazement and fury. The Philistines, in some doubt whether it be perfectly safe to approach the giant, seem anxious each to yield up to his neighbour the honour of binding the strong man. The objects are singularly well grouped, and the story is told with striking distinctness. The scene is lighted up by the glare of torches, held by individuals in the rear of the crowd.

In the same apartment there is a small landscape not unworthy of Cuyp; the foreground is so warm, fresh, and sunny, the trees so rich, the air so pure. The background, likewise, is invented with great felicity: lonely, pastoral plains, abounding with wood and water; hills blue, distant, and poetically beautiful; and a sky bright, pearly, and natural, such as one would love to dream under on a summer's day. The *Marriage of the Virgin*, by Perugino, is chiefly remarkable for its truth to nature: the figures, though stiff and hard, are not at all more so than those of men and women sometimes are; and the accessories, such as the drapery, the buildings, &c. are singularly well delineated. There is a small holy family, which, from its sharp but strong manner, and the singular style of the colouring, I should take to be by Dominichino. A portrait of James I. of England, by Rubens, taken when the royal pedant was somewhat advanced in years, has a very strong resemblance to the received portrait of Lord Bacon; the same closeness, the same cunning, the same hardness of character,

are visible; and, whatever history may say to the contrary, the king *looks* every whit as wise as his minister. Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes, by Paul Veronese, said to be the identical picture described by the President Dupaty in his letters from Italy, is a piece altogether in the style of our modern poetry; that is, it is only horrible, though meant to be sublime. There are several other pictures of great merit; but these are the most conspicuous, and perhaps the most valuable.

It is chiefly from the manner in which a nation celebrates the mysteries and performs the ceremonies of its religion, that foreigners, in general, judge of the force and fervency of its piety; and, although I think that nothing can be positively inferred from these things, I am still persuaded, that a careful observation of them may aid us materially in forming our judgment of a people. Good Friday being one of the most holy days of the year in every Christian country, I was curious to discover how it was observed by the Normans, and walked in to Caen early in the morning. I had been previously informed, that the calvaries were hung with black, in token of the mourning of the land, and that great preparations were making to render the ceremonies of the day peculiarly striking and effective. On approaching the city, I was strongly reminded of an English Sabbath, for a dead silence reigned on all sides. On the road there were extremely few people; none, indeed, but a knot of female peasants hastening to mass, and two or three workmen who imagined themselves too poor to keep a single holiday in the year. On Sundays, the air is alive with the music or the noise of a thousand bells, calling the faithful to prayer; but, on this day, nothing of the kind was heard: in fact, no bells are rung during the last three days of this holy week. On entering the town, however, it became evident that, though the church may be

extremely desirous to cause its holydays to be observed, the disposition of the people, seconded by the spirit of the government, prevailed. The hour of divine service had begun; but the shops of all kinds were open, wagons were driving to and fro, and the every day business of life, in all its details, was going on as upon ordinary occasions. Even at the very doors of the churches, the devotees of business were shuffling those of religion, with as perfect an indifference as if they had been of a totally different faith, which, perhaps, they were.

The church of St Jean, lying exactly in my way, was the first that I entered. Here the service was considerably advanced: the people were thronging towards the eastern end of the building, where the priests, in considerable numbers, were chanting the service aloud. The altar, I observed, was hung with black, the priests were dressed in the same colour, and all the pictures and images, wont to be worshipped on other days, were now covered with red or crimson cloth, in remembrance of the shedding of the blood of Christ. Behind the altar, in a small chapel, was a tomb, representing that in which the body of Christ was laid by his disciples: it was very tastefully constructed and decorated, and hung with crimson curtains fringed with white.

About the railings which separate the choir from the nave there was a continual thronging and ebbing away of people, which strongly excited my curiosity, and, placing myself among those who were crowding with anxious looks towards the spot, I soon unravelled the mystery: the object of their eager devotion was to kiss a little silver image of Christ, fastened upon a cross of ebony. The priest, who presented it to the lips of the devotees successively, carried a small white napkin in his other hand, to wipe the mouth of the image after every kiss.

From this church, I repaired to that of St Pierre,

where, though the building be more lofty and magnificent, the ceremonies were less splendid, and the people less genteel, and less numerous. It was market-day, however; so that, if there were fewer people within this church, there were many more on the outside, with apple-stalls, oranges, cauliflowers, &c. laughing, chatting, and driving bargains as earnestly as Jews.

From this badly situated church I proceeded to that of St Etienne, where I found still fewer persons than at either of the former, and a more striking want of decency and decorum. The greater portion of the body of the church was empty, and the little mob which crowded the vicinity of the choir consisted chiefly of poor women and dirty boys. The women, whose devotion seemed to be warmer than I had before observed it, thronged, in a very close and almost tumultuous manner, about the choir—the place sacred to the men,—and as many as could find room knelt down upon the stone steps; but they were ever and anon compelled to rise, by a fierce, brutal-looking grenadier, or beadle, it is impossible to say which, with a halberd and silver-headed cane in his hand, who spoke to them in the roughest and rudest tone imaginable. Being one of the privileged sex, I entered the sanctuary, and walked up and took my position near the altar.

In a moment or two after this, the whole body of officiating priests, with tapers in their hands, preceded by a troop of little boys, also bearing tapers, put themselves in motion, the principal person among them chanting aloud as they marched. Issuing out of the choir, they defiled between the columns, and sweeping round the body of the church, came up to a small chapel, in which there was a tomb enclosed by white curtains. From this tomb the light of day was as far as possible excluded, in order to give the tapers an opportunity of showing themselves to

advantage. Into this chapel I made several attempts to enter with the rest, but having, I suppose, very much the air of a heretic in my face, I was prevented, — in the first place by the grenadier-beadle, and in the next by a priest, who stood sentinel at the door, to repel the profane.

At length, however, after various unsuccessful endeavours, I observed the door unguarded, and, stealing a march upon the priests, stepped in: but there was a crowd before me, and it was at first impossible to perceive distinctly the objects in the interior of the tomb, from which, as I have observed, daylight had been sedulously excluded, in order to render tapers necessary. By degrees, by dint of much elbowing and pushing, and perseverance, I came up to the mysterious entrance, and found two jolly-looking middle-aged women within, attending, I imagine, to the tapers, and performing various other small offices. Upon the threshold, as it were, of the tomb was placed a small black crucifix, with a tiny figure of Christ, apparently of ivory, fixed upon it, which as many as could squeeze so far kissed twice, upon the feet and the mouth.

I cannot blame the devotion of the catholics, when it is sincere, although I may disapprove of the mode of expressing it; but I certainly could wish that they would be a little less noisy and irreverent in their churches. On this day, for example, when they were assembled to commemorate the most awful event in the history of Christianity, there was no religious solemnity observable in their conduct or countenances: they talked, laughed, and clattered about with their noisy wooden shoes upon the pavement of the church, as if the whole ceremony had been a mere secular pageant got up purely for amusement. They discovered me to be a stranger by my seriousness; for, while I was looking intently at the movements of the priests, a gentleman in the choir inquired of me,

if I were not a foreigner? "I am," I replied. "We have *Duke William* here," said he. "Indeed!" I exclaimed—thinking that perhaps they contrived to introduce him into the ceremonies of Good Friday—"where is he?"—"In the sacristy," replied my informant; "and, if you will follow me, I will shew him to you." I accordingly followed him through crowds of women, and when we had reached the sacristy, I saw, not, as I had expected, a statue of the conqueror, the true hero of Normandy, but a picture, one of the many of the same kind and merit which pretend to be portraits of the tyrant. There was nothing new in it; but, as the gentleman had taken the trouble to shew it to me during the most solemn mass of the whole year, I was careful not to seem disappointed. I therefore looked at it again and again in various lights; and, after having seemed to be vastly satisfied, I politely thanked my conductor, and returned to the choir. It should be remarked, that in this sacristy, in a place of inferior eminence, they have a statue of the Virgin, with a very fierce dragon gaping at her, while she looks about her with the most perfect unconcern.

The spring was this year extremely unhealthy in Normandy: First, intense cold; then suddenly, in March, a degree of heat, equal to what is sometimes felt in July in England, which brought out, as if by magic, the blossoms and the leaves; then again, in the beginning of April, a return of winter—a cold north wind, accompanied by sleet, and afterwards by heavy snow, which was observed next morning lying upon the blossoms and in the bells of the flowers. One day, fire was highly desirable; the next, it was not to be endured, but, on the contrary, the windows and doors were thrown open, to temper the heat of the rooms. As might be expected, every person caught cold; numbers were laid up; a great many died, especially people a little advanced in years, but

who, under ordinary circumstances, might reasonably have anticipated a considerable extension of existence. During the winter, the atmosphere had been generally more clear than clouded; and there was comparatively little rain. When rain falls in spring or summer, it is in torrents; but the sky soon clears up. There is a great deal of thunder and lightning; but high winds are rare.

The plains in the neighbourhood of Caen are profusely covered during the spring and summer months by large red and blue flowers, which favour the passion of the inhabitants for the rearing of bees. I have never myself been able to regard bees as an object of rural economy. The mere sight of these little creatures, wafting through the air, or clustering upon the flowers of spring, awakens other feelings than such as arise from considerations of the quality of honey. In other days, when the spirit of Homer and Virgil was fresh upon me, I have delighted to watch them in the morning alighting on crocuses or violets, cool and moist with dew, or humming about joyously, as if they too had souls, and could feel and enjoy the religious beauty of the universe: And now, when I walk forth here in Normandy, on a fine Sunday morning, to look for bees among the flowers, while the matin song ascends from the catholic church, and my children are running about the gardens or the fields, those days seem to return, with their rich golden sunshine and luxury of feeling. The spring is earlier here than in England; the air in general purer, and more buoyant; and the sun much warmer: it is therefore agreeable, even in March, to ramble into the fields and gardens, to watch the budding of the young trees, and note the progress of the season.

The bees, it seems, are remarkably fond of the white flowers of the sarrazin, which discolours and spoils their honey. I am not informed respecting the

effect of the flowers of various plants upon the little animals themselves; but it is well known that the juice of certain flowers communicates a maddening or intoxicating power to the honey; as was discovered by the Ten Thousand in their retreat, when, through eating a little of it, half the army lost their senses for twenty-four hours, though they afterwards recovered. And Tournefort observes, that the bees of Mazenderan, which feed chiefly upon the flowers of the wild chododendron, produce a honey which causes temporary madness. The bees of Normandy, however, do not, so far as I can learn, produce an article of such deleterious qualities; it is merely rendered dark coloured and disagreeable by their feeding on the flowers of the sarrazin and the colza. The flower of the rosemary is here supposed to improve the taste of the honey. The cruel practice of destroying the bees in order to secure their treasures is not yet banished from Normandy.

Among the signs of spring in this country, there is one which is any thing but poetical; and that is, the croaking of the frogs, which, in the dusk of the evening, and during the night, is so loud and unintermitting, that it disturbs one's sleep. I never heard any thing resembling it in England. It is almost as loud as the scream of the quail. And every pond, ditch, and river in the whole country, appears to nourish myriads of these rivals of the nightingale, who seem to rejoice exceedingly in tuning their terrific voices, and "making night hideous." With this infernal croaking, which nightly brought Aristophanes into my head, another sound, which I heard for the first time in my life in the neighbourhood of Caen, is frequently mingled. Having occasion to visit the city one night in the early part of the spring, I was startled, on approaching the Falaise road, by a sound resembling the distant tinkling of small bells, breaking suddenly, and in a strange manner, upon the ear.

While I was pausing, and endeavouring to conjecture what it might be, a hundred similar sounds seemed to burst up out of the earth, in various places, until all the fields around were alive with this strange music. I was now convinced that it must be the cry of some bird, or reptile, or insect, and was listening to the clear, silvery, fairy tinkling in the distance, when the same sound suddenly burst up in the grass at my feet. I now began to imagine it must be the grasshoppers calling to their mates; but, upon inquiring of the peasants, the only persons who appeared to know any thing of the matter, I was informed that the owners of these fairy bells were the toads. Other persons, however, maintained that it was a species of lizard; others, that it was the frogs; but, upon the whole, the toads seemed *to bear the bell*.

In walking over those plains, especially during warm weather, one is made disagreeably aware that the air is infected with the smell of the manure which the farmers spread at this time of the year over their fields, and which is so strong, that it overpowers the natural sweet scents of spring.

CHAPTER XXI.

Instructions to intending Emigrants to France—Caen the most eligible Situation—Rent of Houses—Lodgings—Articles which Families ought to carry with them—Superiority of English Servants—Wages of French Servants—Hotel Expenses—Alençon, Domfront, Mortain, and Avranches, cheaper places of residence than Caen—Absentees do not live more economically than at Home—their Lives unhappy, from Want of Occupation—French Protestants at Caen—British Congregation.

To those persons who may be desirous of residing in this part of France, an exact statement of the expenses they must necessarily incur, may be useful. No person desirous of economizing should think of settling at Rouen, or, generally, in any part of Upper Normandy, which, I imagine, is one portion of the kingdom where provisions, house-rent, &c. are dearest. Havre de Grâce is too commercial and noisy to invite the residence of strangers; Honfleur, though occupying a healthy and picturesque site, is a dull and dirty town; and Cherbourg appears to be unhealthy.

Caen, the capital of Lower Normandy, and the best built and most pleasant city in all the north of France, is the principal residence of the English in the province. I shall therefore first give the prices of things in this city, and afterwards mention such other places as vie most nearly in attractions with Caen, so that the reader may, from this account, at once discover the cheapest and most eligible situation.

House-rent is very far from being low at Caen. A house large enough to afford comfortable accommodations to a family of ten persons, with servants, will

cost from 1200 to 1500 francs (£48 to £60) per annum, unfurnished. The same house, furnished, would cost from 1800 to 2200 francs (£72 to £88) per annum. A second rate house, unfurnished, from 600 to 1000 francs (£24 to £40); furnished, from 1000 to 1500 francs (£40 to £60) per annum. This difference in the rent of houses arises more from the situation, than from the quality or fitting up of the houses themselves; those in the higher quarter, chiefly inhabited by the English, being much dearer, in proportion to the accommodation they afford, than those which are situated in the other quarters of the city. No foreigner pays taxes the first year of his residence in France; and persons have been frequently known to remain three or four years in the country without paying any.

If a house be taken for a term of three, six, or nine years, six months' notice is required; if for one year, three months'; for any term under that, one month's. Lodgings are generally taken by the month in France, and it is extremely difficult to procure any for a shorter period. In the city of Caen there are, upon an average, about twenty or thirty houses, suited to the taste of the English, to be let annually. There, as elsewhere, the houses in the villages in the neighbourhood are much cheaper, and have generally the advantage of possessing large gardens, well stocked with fruit trees.

The greater number of persons going into Lower Normandy, go by the way of Southampton and Havre de Grâce, between which places there are steam packets constantly plying; but a family or two, wishing to have the whole packet to themselves, might hire one at Southampton, which, for twenty-five pounds, would take them, and all their luggage, to the quay of Caen, the captain defraying all harbour dues and charges whatever. It would be necessary, however, to give the captain timely notice, that he

might advertise his intention of taking passengers on his return. This passage can be made only during the high spring tides, setting off from England three days before the fall or change of the moon; and may be performed, with a fair wind, in eighteen or twenty hours.

It may appear to be superfluous to enter into very minute details respecting the articles which a family may bring with them to France; but, since loss and inconvenience are every day experienced for the want of information of this kind, it is better to run the risk of being tedious, than omit any particular which might be useful. In the first place, all kinds of wearing apparel, of which some articles may be new, if properly made up; sufficient bed and table linen for the use of the family; a small quantity of plate, such as spoons, forks, &c: knives and ordinary forks may likewise be taken, if they have been used. Brussels carpets, or any carpets made with thread, may be taken over, if a little worn, by paying a trifling duty; but English woollen carpets are prohibited entirely. All kinds of kitchen utensils should be taken over, as articles of this kind are of a very inferior description in France. Furniture, such as mahogany tables, drawers, wardrobes, &c. pay a duty of fifteen per cent upon the value in France. By obtaining permission from the principal commissioner of customs, a piano forte, which had been used, might be taken over, by paying a duty of fifteen per cent; but, however old or damaged it may be, it cannot be valued at less than 600 francs (£24.) A harp, whatever be its value, pays a duty of thirty francs; a violin, three francs. There is a trifling duty on new books.

English families are rarely or never satisfied with French servants, who, besides being too familiar and presuming, are generally exceedingly slovenly and dirty in their habits, and often leave their places without an hour's notice. For these reasons, it is daily

becoming more and more the fashion to take over English servants; which is certainly the most judicious mode of proceeding, as it is with the utmost difficulty that strangers accommodate themselves to the manners of a foreign people, more especially in the matter of domestic economy.

They who choose to employ French servants may be glad to know the wages usually paid: a man cook, from 400 to 600 francs (£16 to £24) per annum; an ordinary man servant, from 350 to 400 francs (£14 to £16); a woman cook, from 200 to 300 francs (£8 to £12); a housemaid, from 150 to 200 francs, (£6 to £8.) Servants usually receive when hired a small sum of money, called *wine money*. Men servants find their own clothes. Common gardeners receive two francs per diem.

The expense of travelling from London to any given point in Normandy, may be calculated with the utmost precision; that is, a person may know, before he sets out, within a few shillings how much it will cost him. For example, a single individual may travel from London to Caen for five pounds sterling, if he desires it; and, of course, he may spend twenty. The prices at the first hotel of Caen, from which those of the others may be inferred, are as follows:—A chamber, from 30 sous to 2 francs; breakfast, in the English way, 30 sous, in the French way, 2 francs; dinner, at the table-d'hôte, and when the traveller remains but a single day, 3 francs; when he remains several days, 50 sous. The ordinary country wine, 2 francs per bottle. Dinner served up in a private apartment, from 3 francs to 5 francs, according to the dishes ordered. When a gentleman travels with a servant, the expenses of the latter nearly equal his own. The principal hotels of Caen are, the Hôtel du Place Royale, the Hôtel d'Angleterre, the Hôtel de la Victoire, and the Hôtel d'Espagne.

Caen, however, is not the place in which persons, who remove to France for the purpose of economy, should reside; for living there is somewhat dearer than in most provincial towns, of the same size, in England. The places in which a foreigner may really live cheaply, are Alençon, Domfront, Mortain, and Avranches, where house-rent, the necessities of life, the price of labour, &c. are very low. For example, while a dinner at the table-d'hôte costs three francs at Caen, the same dinner will cost only one franc at Mortain. In all the Bocage, or woody portion of Normandy, in which Mortain is situated, the meat is, moreover, of a better quality than on the seacoast.

With respect to the propriety or rationality of emigrating to France, I can say but little, as most persons who take such a step have particular reasons for so doing, which do not admit of being set aside by any other considerations whatever. It is certain, however, that they who go to reside in France for purposes of economy, very quickly discover that they might have lived much more economically at home. There are very few things cheaper in France than in England, excepting wine and brandy; and, with the aid of these, a man may certainly kill himself for a trifle in that country. House-rent, as I have shewn above, is far from being lower than in towns of equal size in England; and it is considerably higher, if we consider the quality of the house, and of the furniture which is put into it when it is called furnished. If persons ever save any thing in France, it is by rigidly denying themselves all those pleasures and comforts which they were accustomed to enjoy in their own country; but this they might do at home, with far less trouble, and a much less painful sacrifice, only removing to a little distance from the scene of their prosperity.

Indeed, there are not, I imagine, in the whole world, persons more to be pitied than English economizers on the Continent. Cut off from all old associations,

they become restless, dissatisfied, unhappy. They are seldom sufficiently numerous in any place, to allow of each person among them finding society exactly according to his taste; and, whatever they may pretend to the contrary, they never thoroughly enjoy the society of the natives. Reduced to the mere animal gratifications, they eat, drink, sleep, and creep on in discontent and obscurity to their graves. Some of them, it is true, enjoy that sort of excitement which gambling furnishes, and which people without brains mistake for pleasure; but these persons are quickly reduced to a state more wretched than that of the mere eating and drinking emigrants, and generally end by furnishing prematurely a *subject* to the French demonstrators of anatomy.

In proportion to the length of time they have been away from England, their patriotism, or rather their nationality, is strong; for the feeling increases as time softens down the unpleasant and heightens the agreeable features of their own country in their memory. But this only renders them more unhappy in themselves, and more disagreeable to the inhabitants, by constantly impelling them to institute comparisons between England and France, which of course are disadvantageous to the latter. Besides gambling, they have a few other amusements,—scandal, calculation of their expenses, balls, parties, and newspapers. But still their time is badly filled up, and much remains to be devoured by idleness and *ennui*. Go into the streets whenever you please, you will generally observe two or three knots of Englishmen on the look-out for excitement, inquiring about the king's health, the emancipation of the Jews, or the arrival of the last steam packet from England. Every new comer is regarded as a godsend for a few days,—that is, until he ceases to be new; and then another comes, and amuses and disappoints them in his turn. One excellent regulation has been adopted by the

English abroad : a stranger, on his arrival at any place, calls first upon as many of the residents as he desires to be acquainted with, and thus knows just so many persons as he wishes, and no more.

There is a considerable number of French protestants at Caen, — as many, perhaps, as eighteen hundred, — of whom M. Le Cavalier, the principal banker of the city, is one. Their church, which is a very ancient edifice, situated in the Rue de Geole, is elegantly fitted up in the interior. There are two ministers, and divine service is performed twice every Sunday. This church is hired by the British residents, for whom service is performed by a clergyman of the church of England, under the sanction and with the licence of the bishop of London. The French service commences in the morning at eleven o'clock, and in the afternoon at three : the English service at a quarter before one o'clock, and in the evening at half past six, during the summer months. During Lent, lectures are given in the course of the week. The congregations are generally numerous and respectable, and the holy sacrament is frequently administered. On Easter Sunday last the number of communicants, of the English congregation, amounted to more than seventy. The minister of the British congregation is paid by subscriptions raised among the residents ; but he is not particularly well paid, his whole salary, if it may be called so, not much exceeding £ 50 per annum, — a very inadequate remuneration for the frequent services required. The present minister is the Rev. Dr Bennet, an amiable and worthy man, piously attached to his own church, but exceedingly tolerant of other creeds ; in short, precisely such a man as should be intrusted with the duty of so critical a position. The protestant cemetery, which is at a considerable distance from the church, is extensive, and enclosed on all sides by lofty walls.

CHAPTER XXII.

Excursion to Upper Normandy—Scenery about Troarn—Pont l'Eveque—Assassination there—March of Troops upon Caen—Honfleur—Celebration of Whit-Monday—Rouen—The Public Library—M. Licquet—"Graduale" of Daniel d'Eaubonne—Anathema inscribed in a Missal—Case of Medals—The Museum—Three Pictures by Raphael—Portrait of Ninon—Pictures by Jordaens, Canaletti, and Van Eyk, the Inventor of Painting in Oil—View of Rouen from Mont St Catherine—Botanic Garden—Grand Cours—New Bridge—Bridge of Boats—School of Design—M. Langlais—The Cathedral—Dieppe.

ON Monday, May 21st, I left Cormelles at half past four in the morning, on a visit to Upper Normandy. Crossing the fields, which were covered with a dew as heavy as that which falls in Hermon, I met the diligence at Mondeville. The morning was overcast and cold, and the country, though covered with rich verdure, had a sombre and uninteresting appearance. My companions were,—a citizen of Caen, a peasant from beyond Bayeux, and two young men, of respectable appearance, from some more remote part of Lower Normandy.

As we approached Troarn, where there is a small but very ancient church, the country assumed a more broken and picturesque aspect, being lighted up by the morning sun, which had now scattered the clouds, and was shining in all its brilliance. From Troarn we descend, by a very romantic road, into a deep and broad valley, the meadows of which are wholly covered with water in winter, and abound in all sorts of game known in the country. On the

opposite side a ridge of small eminences, thickly and beautifully wooded, extend in an undulating line from north to south, and exhibit many charming pieces of scenery. Here we crossed the small river Dives, which anciently formed the boundary between Upper and Lower Normandy, and entered the arrondissement of Pont l'Eveque, one of the most romantic districts in the province, abounding in steep, woody ascents, and deep, narrow, winding valleys.

The approach to the town of Pont l'Èveque from Caen is exceedingly fine: Turning suddenly round the bend of a hill, we discover beneath our feet, as it were, a lovely valley of great depth, thickly covered with wood, with neat dwellings peeping up here and there among the trees. In the distance, a line of blue hills, of various forms and elevations, close the view. Pont l'Eveque itself is a considerable town, and, a few months ago, was the subject of conversation throughout all Normandy, on account of an assassination which had been perpetrated there. Two men of low rank quarrelled at an auberge, and one of them, like Byron's Lara, conceiving himself to be grievously insulted, followed the other out in the dark, overtook him in a lonely part of the town, stabbed him, and threw his body into the small but deep and rapid river which runs through the place. The body was picked up a few miles below the town, and the assassin, upon whom suspicion had instantly fallen, was apprehended and imprisoned; but, owing to certain circumstances which appeared to mitigate his offence, he was not guillotined, as was expected, but only imprisoned for life.

At the moment we passed, the town was filled with troops marching upon Caen, where it was industriously reported that various attempts had been made by incendiaries to produce a conflagration. One day we were told that fire balls had been thrown into the Lycée; then the rumour was spread that

some of the neighbouring villages had been set on fire; but, when we came to inquire more particularly into the matter, we always found that there was no truth in the story, and that in fact no one could tell with whom it had originated. However, whether well founded or not, these stories furnished the government with an excuse for inundating the country with troops, while many evil-disposed persons did not scruple to insinuate, that it was the English who were the authors of the burnings, which we were required to believe had taken place in our immediate neighbourhood.

All the way from Pont l'Eveque to Honfleur, we meet continually with very fine scenery, the character of which improves as we approach the latter town, the Seine being occasionally visible between the points of the eminences, with the heights of the Pays de Caux in the distance. The descent into Honfleur, between two lofty rows of elms, with the city and the sea before us, the Côte de Grâce on our left, and a charming valley on the right, is truly beautiful; and the day we entered being Whit-Monday, when the inhabitants and the peasantry of the vicinity assemble to celebrate the festival of Notre Dame de Grâce, even the town itself looked well. The streets were enlivened by groups of young women in the picturesque costume of the country, wending their way towards the chapel of Our Lady, or returning thence in the confident assurance of having obtained her blessing.

From Honfleur to Rouen the road runs along the right bank of the Seine, sometimes commanding a view of the noble stream, and sometimes departing considerably from its course. The river, indeed, here makes numerous bendings, while the road has of course been rendered as straight as possible, and, wherever it is visible, flows through a fine valley, flanked on both sides by picturesque hills.

We reached Rouen about nine o'clock in the evening, too late to allow of my seeing any thing of the place. The next morning I commenced my examination of the city with a visit to the public library. I had scarcely issued from my hotel, in order to repair to the place, before I was surrounded by a number of boys, who, having, from various indications, discovered me to be a stranger, were ambitious of serving me in the capacity of guide. With the aid of one of these, I quickly arrived at the library, where, with some little difficulty, I found M. Licquet, the librarian, who was at that moment busily employed in compiling the catalogue of the books and manuscripts of the institution. I had precisely the same sort of introduction to him from a member of the Society of Antiquaries as I had to M. Clogenson at Alençon; but my reception was very different. Though evidently making an effort to be civil, I could easily perceive that politeness or urbanity formed none of the qualities of the gentleman's character; and perhaps the fact of my having been well received by the editor of *Voltaire*, was a reason with M. Licquet why he should be as insipid as possible, for he himself, I am told, is a Bourbonist.

M. Licquet, however, is a clever man, and, if one may judge by his translation of Dr Dibdin's *Travels*, is tolerably well acquainted with the English language. Indeed he himself assured me, that, although he could speak it but indifferently, if at all, he understood it "perfectly well." Be this as it may, he is an excessively dry and disagreeable person in conversation, unless he chose purposely to appear so on the occasion in question; which I mention, that he may, if I have mistaken him, have an opportunity of setting me and several of his fellow-citizens right on that point, for I have been informed by more than one Rouennais, that my ideas of the man were those of a large proportion of the good people of Rouen.

There is very little to delight or amuse any other than a mere bibliomaniac in a flying visit to a public library, for what advantage is there to be derived from the outsides of books, or even from their dates and title-pages? Though there are eleven hundred manuscripts, there are few upon which M. Licquet appeared to set any particular value, at least on account of the beauty of their execution. Among these the first was the *Graduale* of Daniel d'Eaubonne, executed for the abbey church of St Ouen, and completed, after thirty years' labour, in 1682. The size and weight of the book, which have been ascertained with as much exactness as if the matter were of real importance, are as follows:—Length two feet seven inches, breadth one foot ten inches, weight seventy-three pounds. It is certainly a splendid performance, though not worth thirty years of a man's life. The vignettes, which are about two hundred in number, are executed with considerable ability and delicacy, and with colours of the richest and most brilliant kinds. The first of these vignettes, representing the angel announcing to the shepherds of Bethlehem the coming of the Messiah, is an extremely pretty picture, containing a sleeping shepherdess of great merit. The sheep, as well as the shepherds, are awake, and appear to be tranquilly enjoying themselves. The angel just puts his head out of a cloud, as if he were merely informing them of the matter *en passant*.

The *Graduale* is valuable for what may be termed its intrinsic merits; but there are two others, which, though they have also their value as works of art, are esteemed chiefly on account of their antiquity. Of these, the first and most extraordinary is a missal presented to the abbey of Jamiege by Robert, bishop of London, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury. If there were no other proofs of the fact, we might infer that books were extremely rare in those days, since the donor of this manuscript thought it neces-

sary to imprecate damnation upon the person who, under any circumstances, should remove it from the abbey. Dr Dibdin has copied a portion of this extraordinary anathema; but it is so curious that I think it should be given to the public entire, as a proof of the fierce and unthinking piety of our ancestors. It should be remarked, however, that there is no certainty of its having been inscribed upon the book by Robert; and indeed, a portion of it being written in blacker ink, and in a more modern character, the presumption appears to be, that it is the doing of some sanguinary monk, who set a higher value upon parchment than upon the souls of men. Be this as it may, the anathema is as follows:—

“Notum sit omnibus tam præsentibus quam futuris per succedentia tempora fidelibus, quod ego Robertus Abba Gemmetesium prius, postmodum vero sanctæ Londoniorum presul factus, dederim librum huic Sanctæ Mariæ in hoc mihi commissio monachorum Sancti Petri cenobio, ad honorem sanctorum quorum hic mentio agitur, et ob memoriale mei, ut hic in perpetuum habeatur. Quem si quis, vi, vel dolo, sen quoquo modo, isti loco subtraxerit, animæ suæ, propter quod fecerit, detrimentum patiatur, atque de libro viventium deleatur, et cum justis non scribatur.”

The addition in blacker ink is in the same spirit,—
“Et severissima excommunicatione dempnetur quis vel unum de palliis quæ dedi isto loco subtraxerit, sive alia ornamenta, candelabra argentea, sive aurum de tabulâ.”

In the principal apartment of the library, from the windows of which we have a very fine view of the surrounding country, there is a case of medals representing the most celebrated individuals of modern times, principally of France; among which I particularly noticed those of Abelard and Heloise. Abelard is in his monk's costume, and somewhat old; but, excepting the nose, which is a little too small

and pointed, Heloise is exactly what she should be,—a proud, wayward, impassioned woman. The effigies on her tomb, supposed to be an exact likeness, represents her with a nose of the true Grecian form, which is more congruous with our ideas of high sentiment and inextinguishable passion. Among the male heads, I could not see that of Napoleon.

From the library I went to the museum, which is open every day to strangers, where I found the conservator as communicative and obliging as M. Licquet was the reverse. There are several extremely fine pictures in the collection; but here, as well as at the library, there is no catalogue, so that one is obliged to discover, in the best way he can, the history and authors of the various pieces, except when M. Descamps, the conservator, is at hand.

I was here fortunate enough, however, to make one of those rapid acquaintances, which constitute one of the greatest pleasures and pains of travelling; since they are no sooner made than they are broken. About the middle of the gallery, a young artist was busily at work, copying *a copy* of Raphael, for some country church in the neighbourhood of the city, as I afterwards learned. His bland, open countenance tempted me to speak to him, and we very quickly got into conversation on the arts generally, and more especially on that of painting. He had studied three years in Italy, and had also been in England, where he had seen and admired the magnificent productions of Martin, of whose genius he spoke with enthusiasm.

I had now a guide through the gallery worth a hundred catalogues. We moved from picture to picture, extolling one thing, criticising another, but certainly more pleased with the conversations the pictures gave rise to, than with the pictures themselves. The Caennais boast of possessing an original of Perugino, the master of Raphael; but we had here three small pieces, said to be the work of Raphael

himself, viz. — “The Adoration of the Magi,” “The Baptism,” and “The Resurrection of Christ.” They were painted, according to tradition, when the great artist was but fourteen years old. They are certainly very ancient, and there is no reason why they should not be the production of the “divine” Raphael; for genius, like every thing else, has its infancy, and these are the creations of an immature mind. The forms are stiff, the countenances by no means beautiful, the landscapes precise, starched, and puritanical, as it were; yet there is the indication of latent force, or, at least, one fancies so.

A portrait of Ninon, painted by I know not whom, is perfectly exquisite. It was taken when the lady was young and innocent, if she ever was so, for it betrays none of those qualities of mind and heart which have rendered the original so famous. I should have conjectured Ninon to have been a dark beauty, with tresses of jet, and eyes of fire; but she was nothing of all that. On the contrary, she was a delicate *blonde*, a gentle modest-looking creature, with blue eyes, and cheeks slightly carnationed. Her only defect was to have had hair too fine and scanty, her tresses being rather apologies for ringlets, than those rich sunny curls which one would have expected to see on the temples of one so fair and so celebrated.

Close to this portrait, as if the picture hanger had meant to be satirical, is a picture of Venus and Mars, — clever, but unsuccessful as an embodying of beauty. The goddess, seated in a happy and chaste attitude upon a couch, regards with a tender, sweet, but by no means voluptuous smile, a group of Cupids drawing the immortal homicide towards her. “Daybreak,” by Jordacus, is a picture of great originality and truth to nature. It is just such a scene as one might see, any summer morning, in the country, by rising a little before day, but so admirably natural, and so exquisitely finished, that it would be impossible

to see and not be struck by it. In the foreground is a Dutch farm-yard, with a group of peasants characteristically employed: one is ascending a ladder to a henroost; another is busy about the cows; a third is occupied in some other rural labour; while the light of the morning is just beginning faintly to turn the sky gray in the east, and to spread itself over the earth. The trees, the fields, the distant hills, are seen emerging from the darkness with the fresh dew upon them; and every thing, in fact, is exactly as we find it in nature. This is the sole charm of the picture; but it is irresistible.

Between Jordaens and Canaletti there is a vast difference; yet I can admire the architecture and artificial scenes of the latter, as well as the natural beauties of the former. Canaletti has two fine pictures in the collection:—"The Castle of St Angelo, with the neighbouring quarter of Rome," and "The Pope blessing the Tiber." Veruot, who has also a picture of "The Castle of St Angelo" in the gallery, has brought the sea up to the walls of Rome; and, in another scene, has sent the Tiber dashing by the foot of the Coliseum.

The finest picture in the museum, according to the general opinion, though it be but little to my taste, is "The Ecstasy of St Francis," by Ludovico Carracci; and the most curious, "A Virgin surrounded by Angels," and a group of young women, not at all less divine, by Van Eyk, the inventor of painting in oil. The painter has introduced his own portrait into the picture, regarding the *dramatis personæ*; and there is but little likelihood that he has flattered himself, for he looks exactly like a half-starved pauper.

At the extremity of the principal apartment is a statue of Corneille, of the natural size, in *terra cotta*. There are several pictures, by young artists, some of which are clever, particularly a woman coming out of the bath, by Bapaume.

When I had sufficiently examined the valuable pictures, and glanced over the inferior ones, I took my leave of my young artist, after having made an engagement to meet him again in the afternoon, when he promised to shew me whatever was most worthy of notice in the city. The first thing I did on quitting the museum, was to visit the Mont St Catherine, a hill which commands the whole city of Rouen, and was formerly crowned by a large and lofty castle, from before which Henry IV. was repulsed by the Marquis de Villars. Of this castle nothing now remains but two fragments of wall, which must very soon be overthrown by the storms of winter, and even now appear to menace the unwary traveller, who may screen himself from the wind beneath their shelter. Near the same spot formerly stood the Abbey of the Holy Trinity of the Mountain, and the Chapel of St Michael's Priory; but at present no trace of them remains.

The view from the summit of Mont St Catherine is exceedingly fine: the Seine, with its green and woody islands; the city, with its numerous spires and public buildings; and the verdant country, hemmed in on all sides by blue hills. From this height I descended again to the city, and, having strolled for some time along the Cours Dauphin, entered the Botanic Garden,—a small plot of ground, well stocked with plants, indigenous and exotic, and kept in great order. At Caen, the Botanic Garden, on the contrary, is allowed almost to run wild; at least I conjectured so much from a single glance I once caught of it, when, after attempting in vain to obtain permission to visit it at leisure, accompanied by one of the ablest botanists of the city, we got, by considerable manœuvring, inside of the gates. The only reason for our exclusion was the principal gardener's being ashamed to allow his neglect, and the effects of it, to be seen.

The Grand Cours, which runs along the right bank of the Seine, from the New Bridge, towards Paris, is a very splendid promenade, and would do honour to a great capital; but the walk next the river is blocked up with heaps of large stones, collected for the purpose of facing the quay, or finishing the approaches to the bridge. The people of Caen keep their promenades in better order. The manner in which the new bridge has been constructed is most preposterous: instead of running in a straight line across the stream, it makes a kind of elbow, the point of which rests upon the little Isle de la Croix, lying nearly in the middle of the river; and thus, instead of being an ornament, it is a disgrace to the city. If the reason I have heard given for this absurdity be the real one, it is still more disgraceful to the authorities than want of taste or judgment: a very rich and influential man, having a house on one side of the river, by which he wished the road should pass, the bridge was made crooked to oblige him; and thus, for the temporary gratification of this individual, a lasting monument was utterly spoiled, and converted into a laughing-stock. The old bridge of boats, which is a real object of curiosity to the visitor, has been too often described to require my giving any account of it.

As the hour appointed had not yet arrived in which I was to meet my young artist, M. Lucien Langlois, I walked through the city in every direction, now pausing to observe the construction of a fountain, and now to note the costume of the women who flocked about it. In the course of my ramble, I saw a large, plain building, in the conventual style, which had the air of having been secularized, and felt considerable curiosity to know what was going on in the interior. Upon inquiring of a lamplighter in the court, I learned it was the School of Design, and, confiding in that amenity and urbanity which

almost always distinguish the manners of artists, I entered without the least hesitation. Ascending the large stone stairs, and passing along a small corridor, I arrived at a door which I supposed to be that of the *studio*, and, knocking, was immediately admitted by a student of most prepossessing appearance. I explained the motives of my visit, and, in an instant, was quite at home among the few young men who remained in the school, for the hour of study was past. On all sides were models, designs, pictures, and engravings,—the Venus, the Apollo, the Antinous, &c. What struck me most, however, was the cast of a girl, in plaster of Paris, who had formerly been a model at this school, and was now at the capital. It was most exquisite. The limbs were of the finest proportion, and the whole form of the most graceful and delicate kind, except the upper part of the torso and the head, which were wanting; though the students assured me they were every way equal to the portion of the figure which was before us. The performances of the pupils, a number of which I carefully examined, were, in many instances, highly creditable to their talents; though I was here more than ever struck by the close, and almost servile manner in which our youth are taught to imitate “the ancients,” almost to the exclusion of the study of nature. The difference between the Greeks and us appears to consist in this—that they studied themselves, while we only study them; and the result, of course, is, that we are able imitators, while they reached the summit of perfection by imitating nothing but nature. But, if I admired the talent, I admired still more the enthusiasm, liberality, and politeness of these young men; and those flashing rays of hope and confidence which appeared to foretell future eminence in their art.

When it was near four o'clock, I hurried away to the Rue des Bons Enfants, where Fontenelle lived,

and where I was to meet with my obliging young friend, Langlois. While I was looking about, and inquiring for the house, the numbers being so confused and huddled together that they were no guide the one to the other, I was accosted by one of the strangest figures I ever beheld. It was that of a man about the middle size, lean and lank, and dressed in a long gray frock, covering all his other garments, and fastened about the waist by a broad leathern girdle, after the oriental fashion. On his head was a small skullcap, from beneath which a profusion of long black hair descended upon his shoulders, and his chin was garnished with a beard which a Rabbi might be proud to own. His countenance, too, was oriental, and his gait that of a man who had not been accustomed to bustle through the crowded streets of a civilized country. "Ah, you are inquiring for the house of M. Langlois?" said he; "I had come out to seek you; he is waiting for you." So saying, my original turned round, and moved on before me toward the artist's abode.

This turned out to be a large and splendid mansion, several apartments of which were converted into a kind of gallery, where the owner's productions were suspended on the walls. My strange conductor, I found, was the son of an Arab, by a Frenchwoman, and served M. Langlois as a model. Among the numerous pieces which covered the sides of the rooms, and did no less credit to the industry, than to the talent, of the artist, were several copies of subjects from the walls of houses at Pompeii — such as genii, goddesses, &c. executed in a very superior manner, and resembling, as nearly as possible, the Greek originals. Besides these, there was an abundance of Italian landscapes, figures, and costumes; together with several little sketches of Grecian subjects, made during a short visit to that classic land.

After looking for a while over these matters, we

walked out to see the churches, &c. The first object of our curiosity was, of course, the Cathedral, one of the most ancient and venerable religious monuments in Normandy. According to native antiquarians, the origin of this edifice dates as far back as the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth centuries, when St Mallon constructed a small chapel, upon a portion of the site of the present church; but, I imagine, it would greatly puzzle the most acute of architectural critics to discover the remains of this chapel. The present building is the work of King John of England, who, after the destruction of the ancient structure by fire, in 1200, granted a sum of money for its reconstruction.

This cathedral, more remarkable for size than beauty, is rich in historical associations: here were interred Rollo, first Duke of Normandy; Richard Cœur de Lion; and the Regent Duke of Bedford; but the particular spots where their heroic dust reposes are no longer known. Among the inscriptions, there is one, on a monument erected by Diana of Poitiers to her husband, deserving of notice, as being one of the most remarkable

Sepulchral lies, our holy walls to grace,
that ever was written. The widow thus apostrophizes her dead husband:—

Hoc Ladoice tibi posuit Brezæ sepulchrum,
Pictonis amisso mæsta Diana viro.
Indivulsa tibi quondam et fidissima conjux,
Ut fuit in thalamo, sic erit in tumulo.

How faithful the lady was to her husband the reader need not be told.

The church of St Ouen, which has been visited and described to satiety, is certainly a masterpiece of sacred architecture, altogether as well worth one's seeing as if it had never before been seen. The

church of St Maclou is also admired for its architecture, as that of St Patrice is for its painted windows.

After visiting, in succession, the various churches, and other public buildings of the city, we returned to my hotel, where, over a bumper of Burgundy, we discussed the merits of the numerous structures and works of art which we had seen. It is no doubt both pleasant and useful to examine the external manifestations of a people's genius, such as their buildings, their works of art, and industry; but the people themselves are, after all, the great object of study, and I have always found more pleasure and instruction from conversing freely with a knot of original or sober-minded men, such as one may generally find if he chooses, than from the sight of a hundred public edifices, however vast or imposing. There is, to be sure, a time for every thing; and, to understand a people thoroughly, it is necessary to examine the creations of their genius, no less than their personal character. At Rouen my glance at Upper Normandy terminates; for though I visited Dieppe, my stay was too short to allow of my saying any thing respecting it, except that it is a small, bustling place, pleasantly situated, where a stranger might, apparently, find a very agreeable residence.

APPENDIX.



APPENDIX.

NO. I. PAGE 44.

Antiquities of Vieux.

“ LES plus considérables des peuples qui habitaient la partie de la Neustrie où est le Calvados, étaient les *Viducasses*, ou *Biducasses*, dont la capitale, long-temps placée à Bayeux, a été découverte près de Caen, dans un village appelé Vieux.

“ Près de Caen, à une demi-lieue de la rivière d'Orne, est le village de Vieux, situé dans une vallée fort découverte, et voisin d'une carrière de marbre rouge ; des preuves sensibles ont fait penser unanimement que ce village avait été autrefois une habitation romaine. C'est le jugement qu'en porta, vers la fin du XVI^{me} siècle, Charles de Bourgueville, auteur de *Recherches et Antiquités de la ville de Caen*. Huet, dans ses *Origines de Caen*, est de la même opinion ; mais il croit que cette habitation était tout simplement un camp romain.

“ Dans un voyage que l'abbé Le Bœuf fit en Normandie en 1746, il fut à même de se convaincre de l'erreur du savant évêque d'Avranches ; car, après avoir examiné les lieux, et pris connaissance des objets qu'on y avait trouvés, après avoir comparé l'emplacement de Vieux avec les

distances indiquées par la carte de Peutinger, et ce que dit Ptolémée de la situation de quelques villes voisines de cette des Viducassiens, il en a conclu, avec la plus grande certitude, que c'est là, à Vieux, qu'était l'Augustodunum, capitale de ces peuples, qui avaient plusieurs autres villes ; entre autres l'*Arigenus Viducassiorum*, sur ou près l'emplacement duquel a été élevée la ville de Bayeux, comme nous le dirons plus bas.

“ On ne voit aux environs de Vieux qu'une seule montagne, située vers le midi, au bas de laquelle passe la petite rivière de Guine. Les carrières de pierre blanche sont fort communes dans ce canton, et c'est ce qui déterminait sans doute les Romains à le choisir pour y placer leur demeure. Lors de leur premier établissement dans les Gaules, les villes qu'ils construisirent n'étaient ni closes de murs, ni formées de maisons contigues les unes aux autres ; mais l'Augustodunum, capitale des Viducassiens, n'était-il pas renfermé dans le simple territoire de la paroisse de Vieux ; il s'étendait sur une partie de celui des deux autres paroisses plus voisines de la rivière d'Orne, et qui sont un démembrement de celle de Vieux. Huet en a fait la remarque, et il ajoute en preuve, que, suivant la tradition du pays, il y avait autrefois à Vieux trois ou quatre églises.

“ Ce qui ajoute à ces indices, pour prouver que Vieux est l'Augustodunum de la table de Peutinger, et la capitale des Viducassiens, ce sont les nombreuses découvertes d'anciens débris et monumens qu'on y a trouvés. M. Foucault, intendant de la généralité de Caen, prit soin, en 1706, de les faire recueillir, et d'examiner ceux qui étaient sur les lieux. L'abbé Le Bœuf en a rendu compte dans les *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, et Huet en parle dans ses *Origines de Caen*.

“ On a trouvé, en différens temps, dans le cimetière de Saint-Martin de cette paroisse, et dans le champ nommé *Castillons-Gelez*, des tombeaux de pierre couverts, dans lesquels étaient ensemble plusieurs squelettes, ayant des hallebardes à côté d'eux, des pots, et des tuyaux de terre cuite, et de larges briques ornées de feuilles d'acanthé.

“ On découvrit encore au même endroit un grand nombre

de médailles du Haut-Empire, entre autres de l'impératrice Crispine, femme de l'Empereur Commode, jusqu'à Constantin; un beau bassin de pierre, d'environ douze pieds de diamètre, entouré de trois rangs de sièges, avec une ouverture, par laquelle, au moyen d'un escalier de cinq degrés, on descendait dans le bassin, dont le fond était très-uni, et construit de belles pierres blanches, jointes ensemble avec un ciment très-dur et poli; au-dessous du bassin étaient des tuyaux de briques avec des pierres, que liait le même ciment. On abattit une voûte qui couvrait une étuve, dans laquelle on trouva encore le fourneau qui l'échauffait, tout noirci de fumée; dans une petite fenêtre, plusieurs petits instrumens d'ivoire, qui servaient dans l'usage des bains à la propreté du corps. On découvrit aussi plusieurs autres voûtes renversées, qui faisaient partie du grand bâtiment où étaient les bains; les murs avaient plus de deux cents pieds de longueur et près de cinq d'épaisseur; ils étaient construits alternativement d'un lit de briques d'un très-beau rouge, et d'un lit de pierres blanches, toutes d'un même échantillon, liées avec du ciment. A force de travail, on parvint à un second bassin, semblable au premier. Il avait l'écoulement de ses eaux par des tuyaux de briques, qui les conduisaient dans un petit vaisseau. D'autres recherches firent découvrir un aqueduc, qui, selon sa direction, devait passer par-dessous le village de Vieux, pour recevoir l'eau d'une fontaine qui en est voisine.

“ A côté l'on a trouvé les restes d'un gymnase d'une grande étendue, construit selon les règles décrites par Vitruve; on y découvrit un grand tombeau de pierre, dans lequel était le squelette d'un homme, et des médailles romaines; un fût de colonne, dont on ne trouva pas le chapiteau; la statue d'une femme, ayant la tête voilée, et d'une grande beauté, tenant une patère dans la main droite; un Mercure, d'un pied et demi de hauteur, bien conservé, et d'une belle exécution.

“ Ces monumens, et beaucoup d'autres, qui furent découverts à Vieux, montrent bien que là était une ville; et cette ville, offrant de grands décombres, et étant située dans le pays des Vidueassiens, doit nécessairement être

l'Augustodunum, ou capitale de ces peuples, ainsi que le prouve judicieusement l'abbé Le Bœuf, dans la dissertation que nous avons déjà citée.

“ Quant à la différence du nom de *Vieux* et d'*Augustodunum*, elle s'explique par le changement survenu dans la manière de désigner les cités gauloises vers le troisième siècle, ainsi que l'explique l'abbé Beley.

“ Outre ces restes de l'ancienne existence des habitans du Bessin, on en trouve à Thorigny, petite ville du département de la Manche, un très-remarquable ; c'est un cippe de marbre, d'environ cinq pieds du haut sur deux de large, et dont trois côtés sont chargées d'inscriptions. On le déterra dans le village de *Vieux* en 1580 ; et l'année même de la découverte, il fut transporté à Thorigny, éloigné de sept à huit lieues. Ce monument resta longtemps dans l'obscurité. Jean Petit, official et chanoine de Bayeux, auteur d'une carte de ce diocèse, dont il avait entrepris l'histoire, était le premier qui l'ait examiné. Il en fut fait plusieurs copies, plus ou moins correctes ; enfin, dans un voyage que fit l'abbé Le Bœuf, en 1746, dans cette partie de la Normandie, il examina le monument, et en copia les inscriptions avec une grande exactitude.

“ Dans le compte qu'il en rendit à l'Académie des Inscriptions, en 1747, il nous apprend qu'on y lit ‘ que ce cippe portait une statue élevée en l'honneur de Titus Semnius Sollemnis, fils de Sollemninus, viducassien d'origine, et l'un des pontifes de cette ville. Elle lui fut érigée après sa mort, sous le consulat d'Annius Pius et de Proculus, en conséquence d'un décret général de la province des Gaules, dans la ville des Viducassiens, sur un terrain concédé par le sénat de cette capitale. Les motifs d'un tel honneur accordé par la nation à un simple particulier, sont, ses services, son mérite personnel et généralement reconnu, ses liaisons distinguées, mais surtout les spectacles qu'il a donnés à ses concitoyens pendant quatre jours consécutifs.’ ” — *Description Topographique et Statistique de la France*. No. 49, p. 41, 42.

NO. II. PAGE 132.

Dress of the Women of the Bocage.

In illustration of the subject of female dress, I will copy, from the naïve but fantastical historian of the Bocage, a very curious passage, (p. 236-241,) in which the reader will discover an indignation against elegant apparel, which would not have disgraced a monk of the middle ages : —

“ L’habillement des femmes du Bocage était très-simple anciennement ; il consistait en une camisole à large taille, avec des manches, au dehors desquels étaient deux épais volumes de plis, qui prenaient depuis l’épaule, et aboutissaient à de grands paremens plats, semblables à des aîles, au derrière des coudes ; des grandes manchettes, festonnées à deux ou trois rangs, s’ouvraient en éventail, et couvraient une partie de l’avant-bras, — mais ce n’était que pour les femmes riches. Leurs jupes de tiretaines ou de serge étaient d’une seule couleur, sans rayures ; mais, vers le commencement du siècle passé, l’usage des justes-au-corps d’étamine s’introduisit parmi les Bocaines, avec la callemande d’Angleterre, — ce furent les premières rayures qu’on vit dans ce pays ; c’est à Torigny que cet usage a été le plus en vogue. Ce n’est que depuis le milieu du même siècle, que l’usage des mantelets s’est établi, particulièrement à Vire et à Granville. Les premiers furent de tiretaine ; on en fit en suite d’indienne et de taffetas. Auparavant, les femmes ne portaient que des capots de camelot noir. Les dames riches avaient des capes, ou grands manteaux, qui leur descendaient jusqu’aux talons. Ce n’était guères que pour les femmes mariées ; car les jeunes filles laissaient voir toute l’élégance de leur taille ! mais sitôt que elles avaient un mari, persuadées, sans doute, qu’elles ne devaient plus plaire qu’à lui seul, toutes les charmes et la beauté des formes étaient ensevelies sous le voile de la cape. •

“ Les colinettes ne sont à la mode que du même temps. Avant l'invention de cette coiffure, les femmes ne portaient que des eornettes de toile, de bâtiste, ou de coton, dont les barbes tombaient des deux côtés sur la poitrine, comme le rabat des gens de justice.

“ Peu à peu on les releva sur la tête ; delà sont venus les frisons, les coiffes montées, les bonnets ronds, les bonnettes, &c. Mais l'ancien usage se maintient encore long-temps parmi les femmes dévotes, et nulle personne du sexe n'osait approcher de la table sacrée qu'elle n'eût abaissé sa coiffe à la manière antique.

“ Ce fut la pitié que autrefois décora la gorge des femmes de croix et de petits reliquaires. Mais bientôt les riches, sous prétexte d'en avoir de plus précieuses, en firent un objet de luxe. Depuis le commencement du 18^{me} siècle, on vit succéder aux eroix d'or et d'argent diverses sortes de colliers, les perles, les pierreries, les saint-esprit, les maintenons, les jeannettes, les portraits, les esclavages, &c.

“ Quant au costume des femmes d'aujourd'hui, comme il faudrait un volume entier pour le décrire, je n'ai pas le courage de m'engager dans ce labyrinthe de ridicules et de frivolités ; ce que j'en dirai seulement en général c'est qu'autant les femmes du temps passé étaient décentes et chastes, et se faisaient gloire d'être graves et modestes, autant celles de notre siècle mettent tout en œuvre pour paroître cyniques et voluptueuses. Nous ne sommes plus au temps où les plus grandes dames se faisaient honneur de porter la cordelière. Leurs habillemens étaient aussi larges et fermés, que celui des femmes de nos jours sont ouverts et légers, et d'une finesse que les formes du corps, au moindre mouvement, se dessinent de manière à laisser rien ignorer. A peine se couvrent-elles le sein d'un voile transparent, très-léger, ou de je ne sais qu'elle palatine qu'elles nomment point-à-jour, qui, en couvrant tout, ne cache rien ; en sorte que, si elles n'étaient pas tous leurs charmes à-découvert, c'est que les hommes les moins scrupuleux, qui se contentent de les persifler, en seraient révoltés tout-à-fait. D'ailleurs, c'est que ce n'est pas encore la mode ; plusieurs poussent même l'impudence

jusqu'à venir dans nos temples sans coiffure, les cheveux hérissés comme des furies ; d'autres, par une bizarrerie qu'on ne peut expliquer, se dépouillent, autant qu'il est en leur pouvoir, des marques de leur propre sexe, semblant rougir d'être femmes, et deviennent ridicules en voulant paraître demi-hommes.

“ Après avoir déshonoré l'habit de femmes, elles ont encore voulu prostituer celui des hommes. On les a vues adopter successivement les chapeaux, les redingotes, les vestes, les gilets, les bottes, et jusqu'au boutons. Enfin, si, au lieu de jupons, elles avaient pu s'accommoder de l'usage de la eulotte, la métamorphose était complète ; mais elles ont préféré les robes trainantes ; c'est dommage que la nature ne leur ait donné une troisième main, qui leur serait nécessaire pour tenir cette longue queue, qui souvent patrouille la boue ou balaye la poussière. Plût à Dieu que les anciennes lois fussent encore en vigueur, où ceux et celles qui portaient des habits indécents étaient obligés d'aller à Rome, pour en obtenir l'absolution, qui ne pouvait leur être accordée que par le souverain pontife.

“ En effet, le pape Eugène ne permit, en 1435, aux Cordeliers, d'absoudre les femmes qui portaient des habits indécents et des robes à queues, que dans le cas où elles n'auraient fait que suivre la coutume du pays, et non à dessein de séduire ; et s'il permit également d'absoudre les tailleurs et couturières qui faisaient de ces habillemens, ce ne fut qu'à condition qu'ils n'imagineraient plus de nouvelles modes. O antiques et sages ordonnances, que vous seriez utiles de nos jours !

“ Mais après m'être ennuyé à découvrir la turpitude de quelques folles, à qui la fureur des modes tourne la tête, ou dont la toilette fait toute l'occupation, il est doux de se reposer sur un sujet plus agréable, en essayant de tracer le tableau des vertus et des talens du plus grand nombre des femmes du Boeage, où l'on peut dire que les bonnes mœurs et l'honnêteté sont encore en honneur, malgré le débordement des vices qui ont inondé la France pendant l'absence de la religion. Mais comme les Boeains y sont très-attachés, et que la plupart lui sont restés fidèles, même durant son exil, on doit espérer que l'air hagar et

les reparties fières de quelques femmes (assaisonnées d'un b. ou d'un f.) disparaîtront entièrement. On voit déjà avec plaisir que la saine morale reprend son empire de jour en jour, surtout parmi les femmes, qui ne devraient jamais oublier que la sagesse et la modestie sont les deux plus beaux ornemens de leur sexe."

NO. III. PAGE 140.

Date of the Foundation of the Cathedral of Bayeux.

Antiquaries greatly puzzle themselves and their readers by attempting, without sufficient data, to fix the date of the erection of this and that structure; some wrangling for a greater, others for a less antiquity.

Non nostrum tantas componere lites.

Dr Dibdin, in his dashing way of speaking, calls this cathedral "the most ancient religious monument in Normandy," in one breath; but, with the next, he informs us, that it was erected in the middle of the twelfth century, by Philippe de Harcourt. The central tower, he discovers, with singular acuteness, to belong to the times of Francis I. whereas, in reality, it was built in 1715. So much for our bibliomaniac's capacity to judge of the date of buildings by their appearance. The doctor, in fact, is a little too ambitious, as he wishes at the same time to admire and not to admire a thing,—which both gods and men will allow to be somewhat difficult. He never fails, however, to make a stroke at Ducarel, one of the most sober and judicious of architectural critics. "That," says he, "which scarcely warmed the blood of Ducarel, has made my heart palpitate violently;" from which you would infer that he was excessively charmed with it. But, although he found some small portions of the edifice worthy

of praise, he condemns the cupola and the lantern — perhaps because Ducarel had found them tasteful and elegant ; describes the spires as more lofty than elegant ; and has scarcely a good word to say for any thing in the interior. After this, the reader may perhaps wonder what it was that made the Doctor's heart beat. I suspect it was the *vin de Beaune* which he expected to sip after dinner ; for there is not one of Homer's heroes who rejoices, or “ chirrup more over his cups,” than our sacerdotal antiquarian. Turner, who, as well as Ducarel, understands what he is about, when architecture is the question, bestows great praise upon several portions of this cathedral, but joins with the Doctor in condemning the cupola.

No. IV. PAGE 148.

Battle of Port.

The collection of huts, known by the name of Port, is renowned in the department for a *great battle* fought here with the English, of which I will transcribe the history, in compliment to the Normans : —

“ J'ai souvent entendu des vieillards parler gravement de la *bataille de Port*. Il faut apprendre à nos neveux ce que c'est que ce grand fait d'armes. Je tire mon récit du manuscrit d'un témoin oculaire, et je transcris textuellement : — ‘ Le 15 Juillet, 1760, cinq bateaux, chargés de bois de construction, destinés pour Brest, furent poursuivis par plusieurs vaisseaux anglais (faisant partie de l'escadre de l'Amiral Rodney, qui eroisait dans la Manche,) et se réfugièrent sous le canon de la plate-forme de Port, où il y avait trois pièces de 24. Les Anglais tirèrent bien vaillant 500 coups de canon sur les bateaux et sur le village de Port ; mais les boulets passaient par dessus les maisons, et venaient jusqu'au Pont-Fâtu. La poudre manqua dans Port, ce qui fit

que les François ne purent guères répondre aux Anglais. Le capitaine Padié commandant l'un des bateaux échoués eut les reins fracassés d'un boulet, et mourut le lendemain à l'hôpital de Bayeux. Après que le feu eut cessé, les Anglais envoyèrent une plaque, pour demander que les bateaux échoués leur fussent remis ; on leur répondit, que c'était impossible. Le lendemain matin, 16, on envoya une plaque de Port vers les Anglais, pour les prier de ne pas tirer sur le village ; mais ils répondirent, qu'ils allaient raser Port, et ils gardaient trois officiers qui étaient sur la plaque : en effet, bientôt après ils tirèrent plus de 600 coups de canon ; mais, par la grace de Dieu, il n'y eut que quelques maisons d'endommagées, trois canonniers de tués sur la plate-forme, et un pauvre rémoulaire tué sur la falaise, et cinq personnes blessées dangereusement. Il y avait bien six mille personnes, tant bourgeois que paysans, armées de sabres, épées, fusils, fourches, faux, &c. sans compter les gardes, les gardes-côtés, et plusieurs compagnies de cavalerie, tous attendant les Anglais de pied ferme, lesquels Anglais, voyant cette bonne contenance, se retirèrent de devant Port le 16 Juillet, à trois heures après midi.' — PLUQUET, *Histoire de Bayeux*, p. 356-358.

Et voilà la Bataille de Port !

NO. V. PAGE 162.

Robert Duke of Normandy and Arlette.

M. Galeron, as well as myself, doubts the veracity of this tradition. " Nous aussi nous devons l'avouer, nous avons douté de la véracité de cette tradition, et nous avons cru qu'on devoit au moins en offrir une explication un peu plus vraisemblable. Nous rappellerons donc le récit, beaucoup plus naturel, de la première rencontre d'Arlette et de son amant, tel qu'il se retrouve dans un poète presque contemporain, et nous sommes convaincus

que ee passage sera mieux accueilli de nos lectuers, que la fabuleuse anecdote de la fenêtre du vieux donjon.

A Faleise esteit séjornanz
 Li bous duc Robert li Normanz,
 Mutt li est li leurs convenables
 E beaus é sains é delitables.
 C'esteit un de ses granz déporz
 Quad danzeles ce suis recorz ;
 Un jor qu'il veneit de chacier
 En choisi une en un gravier,
 Dans le ruissel d'un fontenil
 Ou ou blanchisseit un cheinsil,
 Od autres filles de borgeis
 Dunt aveit od li plus de treis.
 Tirez aveit ses dras en sus,
 Si cuin pucelles unt en us
 Par enveisure é par geu,
 Pures quand sunt en itel leu.
 Beaus fut li jorz et li touns chanz,
 Ce que ne covri sis blianx,
 Des piés é des jambes parurent,
 Qui si tres beaus et si blans furent
 Que se fut bien au Duc avis
 Que neifs est pale é flors de lis
 Avers la soc grant blanchor ;
 Merveilles y torna s'amor.....

BENEOT DE STE MORE, *Estoire des
 Ducs de Normendie.*

“ Comme on le reconnaît par ce passage, c'est en effet dans les eaux de la fontaine des rochers que Robert vit pour la première fois Arlette. Mais il la vit du vallon, en descendant des bruyères, où il venait de elasser, et il put distinguer d'assez près sa grâce, sa fraîcheur, et sa légèreté, pour se passionner aussitôt pour elle, et former le dessein de la rechercher pour amie. Plus tard, il est vrai, et avant de l'avoir obtenue, il aura pu la regarder des fenêtres de son château, lavant son linge avec ses jeunes compagnes : mais il la connaissait alors ; il avait ses traits

gravés dans le cœur; et il n'avait plus besoin de les distinguer pour en être touché: c'était une contemplation de l'amour; et les distances disparaissent dans ces occasions. C'est sous ce rapport seulement que l'an que tradition peut mériter quelque ombre de confiance."—*Statistique de Falaise*, p. 330, &c.

No. VI. PAGE 183.

Charlotte Corday.

I subjoin, from the pen of an able French writer, a brief history of the close of Charlotte Corday's career. Having spoken of the extraordinary nature of her studies, he observes:—

“Ainsi préparée et cultivée, Charlotte Corday du applaudir aux premiers triomphes de la liberté. Le spectacle de ces imposantes et orageuses discussions, dans lesquelles se plaidait sa cause entre les républicains purs et les frénétiques démagogues qui l’embrassoient pour l’étouffer, remplissait son âme d’horreur pour les uns, et d’admiration pour les autres. Lorsque la désastreuse journée du 31 Mai, en déceimant l’illustre minorité de la convention, eut fait passer aux mains de leurs ennemis le sceptre d’une popularité sanglante, ceux des Girondins qui n’avaient pas d’abord péri se dispersèrent, et quelques-uns conçurent l’espoir d’aller dans les départements, rassembler des vengeurs. Conduits par cette idée, Barbaroux, Lonjuinais, Pétion, Henri Larivière se rendirent dans le Calvados, se flattant d’y trouver les germes d’une insurrection — heureux s’ils eussent pu y trouver beaucoup d’âmes de la trempe de celle de Charlotte Corday. Ce fut elle qui les accueillit avec le plus d’enthousiasme, et qui partagea avec le plus d’ardeur les plans de résistance et de vengeance qu’ils multipliaient dans leur indignation. Le plus jeune

et le plus éloquent de ces proserits était Barbaroux. Né dans le midi, ce député républicain réunissait au don d'une imagination entraînant une belle figure et des formes séduisantes. On supposa que la jeune Charlotte Corday, suspendue chaque jour à ses discours fervens de républicanisme, s'était éprise d'amour pour lui : cela eut été assez naturel ; mais cela ne fut pas. Il faut détruire cette erreur, comme celle qui donne pour premier amant à cette fille admirable un M. de Belzance, qu'elle n'avait jamais connu, puisqu'il fut massacré à Caen au commencement des premiers troubles de la révolution, et à une époque où la jeune Charlotte Corday était encore au couvent. La vérité et la justice veulent également que l'on repousse toutes ces fables, qui dégradent la majesté du sacrifice de cette fille sublime, en lui trouvant des motifs vulgaires. Profondément touchée des malheurs de la France, Charlotte Corday voulut venger à la fois la patrie et les patriotes immolés, en donnant la mort au plus féroce, au plus redoutable des proscriptionnaires. On assure qu'elle hésita quelque temps entre Robespierre et Marat, et que son choix n'était pas encore fait, lorsqu'elle lut une feuille de *l'Ami du Peuple*, dans laquelle la monstre qui prenait ce titre répétait son mot favori sur la nécessité de faire tomber encore deux cent mille têtes. Elle crut n'avoir plus à balancer sur la préférence que méritait ce dernier, et se décida à partir pour Paris. Tout le monde sait avec quel courage elle accomploit son héroïque dessein ; ce que est moins connu ces sont ses réponses devant le tribunal révolutionnaires, admirables de fermeté et de grandeur d'âme. Le président lui adressait quelques questions de forme ; elle l'interrompit. 'Tous ces détails de forme sont inutiles,' dit-elle ; 'c'est moi qui ai tué Marat.' — 'Qui vous a engagée à commettre cet assassinat ?' — 'Ses crimes.' — 'Qu'entendez vous par ses crimes ?' — 'Les malheurs dont il a été cause depuis la révolution, et ceux qu'il préparait encore à la France.' — 'Quels sont ceux qui vous ont portée à commettre cet assassinat ?' — 'Personne ; c'est moi seule qui en ai conçu l'idée.' — 'Que font à Caen les députés transfuges ?' — 'Ils attendent que l'anarchie cesse, pour reprendre leur poste.' — 'Était ce à un prêtre assermenté

ou insermenté que vous alliez à confesser, à Caen ? — ‘ Je n'allais ni aux uns ni aux autres. ’ — ‘ Quelles étaient vos intentions en tuant Marat ? ’ — ‘ De faire cesser les troubles de la France. ’ — ‘ Y a-t-il long temps que vous aviez formé ce projet ? ’ — ‘ Depuis l'affaire du 31 Mai, jour de la proscription des députés du peuple. ’ — ‘ C'est donc par les journaux que vous avez appris que Marat était un anarhiste ? ’ — ‘ Oui ; je savais qu'il pervertissait la France ; et, ajouta-t-elle, en élevant la voix pour dominer l'agitation confuse qui régnait dans la salle, ‘ j'ai tué un homme pour en sauver cent mille ; un scélérat pour sauver des innocens ; une bête féroce pour rendre le repos à mon pays. J'étais républicaine avant la révolution, et je n'ai jamais manqué d'énergie. ’ — ‘ Qu'entendez vous par énergie ? ’ — ‘ J'entends par énergie le sentiment de ceux, qui, mettant l'intérêt particulier de côté, savent se sacrifier pour leur pays. ’

Une autre circonstance remarquable qui se rapporte au moment où elle sortit du tribunal révolutionnaire c'est le remerciement qu'elle adressa à M. Chauveau-Lagarde, son défenseur : — ‘ Vous m'avez défendue comme je devois l'être, ’ lui dit-elle affectueusement ; ‘ je veux vous en témoigner ma reconnaissance ; ces messieurs viennent de m'apprendre que tous mes biens sont confisqués ; je dois quelque chose à la prison, — je vous charge d'acquitter cette dette. ’ Elle dina de bon appétit ; en rentrant à la conciergerie, montra encore plus de gaieté que de coutume, et dit au concierge : — ‘ M. Richard, j'espérois que nous déjeunerions ensemble ; mais ces messieurs m'ont retenue là-haut si long temps que vous me pardonnerez de vous avoir manqué de parole. ’ Elle refusa, avec une fermeté pleine de douceur, de se laisser assister par un prêtre. A sept heures du soir, l'exécuteur se présenta, pour lui lier les bras et lui couper les cheveux : sa force et sa majesté, mêlée de grâce, restèrent les mêmes dans ce moment terrible. ‘ Voilà, ’ dit-elle seulement, ‘ une toilette à laquelle je suis peu accoutumée. ’ Ses adieux au concierge et à sa femme firent couler les larmes des yeux de celle-ci, et des guichetiers eux-mêmes. On dit que le calme de ses traits ne se démentit qu'au moment où le bourreau lui arracha le fichu qui couvrait son sein. A ce coup, la pudeur

outragée se changea un moment en colère, mais ee ne fut qu'un éclair. Ainsi perit, le 17 Juillet, 1793, à l'âge de vingt-cinq ans, cette fille sublime, dont le nom est un immortel honneur pour l'histoire de la France. On chercherat en vain, dans celle de tous les peuples et de tous les temps, un exemple d'héroïsme qui mérite de lui être préféré."

No. VII. PAGE 216.

Visit to Mont St Michel.

I copy from an ancient and rare book of travels an account of an extraordinary visit to Mont St Michel : —

" Vous saurez donc que le dimanche, 6e jour de Septembre, 1654, l'enseigne de nôtre capitaine et les pèlerins l'allèrent trouver a la barrière du chasteau de Caen, puis firent en ordre à l'église S. Pierre, sur le chemin de laquelle le sieur de S. Martin, docteur en théologie, lequel avait été invité à ce pèlerinage par la confrairie, et d'autres personnes considérables, alla au devant d'eux, et les amena à la dite église, où le *Veni Creator* fut chanté: puis les ecclésiastiques marchèrent à la tête du capitaine, lequel, précédé du trompette de monsieur son père et de celui de la ville, marchoit, couvert d'un habit richement étoffé, avec hausse-col doré, l'espée au costé, et la pique sur l'épaule : après suivoient quantité de pèlerins, quatre à quatre, et ensuite on portoit un beau et grand drapeau, où estoit dépeint un ciboire, un Saint Michel, les armes du Roy, de son Altesse de Longueville, de cette ville, et de notre capitaine. Sept tambours, avec des casaques rouges, ornées de dentelle d'argent, et données par nostre capitaine, battoient continuellement. Le sieur du Menil, nostre major, assisté de six sergents, avec chacun une escharpe blanche, données aussi par nostre capitaine, l'espée au costé, et la hallebarde à la main, faisoient marcher la com-

pagnie en un si bel ordre, qu'on aecouroit de tous pas pour la voir.

“ A Noyers, ample repas fut donné par le sieur de la Linette, lieutenant d'une compagnie dans le château de Caen. Il y avoit plaisir à eette table ; car, outre la satisfaction d'y entendre les tambours et trompettes, nostre capitaine avoit un chariot à six ehevaux, qui portoit d'excellent vin, des pastez de venaison, et autres provisions, auxquelles le sieur de la Montagne, maistre d'hostel de M. de Chambay, adjoûtoit tout ee qu'il pouvoit trouver dans les hostelleries, où il se rendoit de bonne heure.

“ LeLundy 7 de Septembre, nous partîmes de la Blanehe Maison, et allâmes eoucher à Villedieu, qui en est éloigné de près de dix lieues. Nos mareseaux des logis arrivoient toujours le premiers, faisoient eompliment au maistre de l'église où nous désirions faire nos prières, retenoient plaees aux hostelleries, et, s'il n'y en avoit assez pour nous loger, ils nous envoioient ehez les bourgeois, conformé-ment à la permission que nostre eapitaine en avoit de son Altesse de Longueville. Les habitans de Villedieu venoient au devant de nous, tant ils étoient impatients de voir une si belle eompagnie, eomposée de près de deux eents maistres. Estant arrivés, nous entrâmes dans l'église, qui est une commanderie de Malthe. On envoya un officier de la dite église au devant de nous, et un prestre nous reçut à la porte. La musique fut chantée par nos douze musieiens, eonduits par le sieur Guilbert, qui en a reçu par tout beaucoup de louanges. Nous partîmes en ordre de Villedieu, et allâmes à Avranches, sur le chemin de laquelle ville, quelqu'un ayant dit que le sieur de S. Martin venoit d'apperevoir le Mont S. Michel, aussitôt nostre eapitaine et toute la eompagnie cria,—Vive la Roy ! fit sonner ses tambours et ses trompettes, et l'on but à la santé du Roy ; puis nostre eapitaine lui donna un de ses trompettes et deux sergeans, et lui permit de faire battre ses tambours et d'ordonner toutes choses le reste du voyage, dont le Roy le remereia, et la eompagnie de l'avoir fait Roy.

“ A un quart de liene d'Avranches, nous fîmes halte pour nous mettre en ordre, et il fut jugé àpropas que le Roy,

qui estoit revestu d'une soutanelle de taffetas, et portoit une canne à la main, monteroit, dans les villes, sur l'un de ses chevaux, et qu'il seroit précédé du dit trompette, et accompagné de deux sergents. Sur le chemin, un des gentilshommes du monsieur de Canisy vint saluer nostre capitaine de sa part, et le prier d'agréer sa maison, et qu'on tirât les canons à son arrivée, ainsi qu'ils firent lorsque la compagnie approchoit de la ville. Nôtre Roy, monté à cheval, nous conduisit à la cathedrale, où l'on chantoit l'office de None, ensuite de quoy il pria qu'on ne continuât point les vespres à l'ordinaire, mais qu'on laissât chanter la musique, ce qui nous fut aussitôt accordé.

“ Nostre musique chantée, nous primes quelques rafraîchissements à l'hostellerie, mais légèrement, à cause de la forte passion qu'un chacun avoit d'arriver au Mont ; et il y avoit grand satisfaction à voir un chacun aller sur la grève à qui mieux mieux. Le Roy y chanta les litanies de la Vierge, et salua S. Michel en l'invoquant ; puis il prit un des pistolets d'un cavalier, qu'il tira vis-à-vis du Mont, et pria la compagnie de s'avancer. En y arrivant l'on tira du corps de garde plusieurs coups de mousquet, et les soldats se mirent en haye.

“ Le lendemain, 9 de Septembre, l'on estoit levé de bon matin, dans l'impatience que l'on avoit de voir l'église, quoyque l'on eust advis dès le soir que l'on n'y entre qu'après sept heures. Chacun estoit ravy en considérant une belle et vast église, bastie sur le haut d'un rocher, avec une très spacieuse abbaye, gouvernée par trente Bénédictins reformez. Avant que d'y entrer, nostre capitaine présenta une couronne d'argent au Roy, qui l'en remercia, et aussitôt fit battre les tambours, et nous marchâmes en ordre depuis le bas du Mont jusque dans l'église. Plusieurs avoient laissé leurs couteaux à l'hostellerie, de peur que les gardes de la porte ne les ostassent à l'ordinaire ; mais, en considération de M. de Chambay, on ne fouilla personne, et laissa-t-on porter l'espée à nostre capitaine et à ses officiers, ce qui ne s'accorde presque jamais, de peur qu'on ne se saisisse de la place ; de plus on tira, à nôtre arrivée au chasteau, tous les canons : et nôtre Roy estant entré dans l'église, il entonna par trois fois, *Sancte Michaël*,

ora pro nobis ! La compagnie lui répondit avec beaucoup de dévotion. Il dit ensuite l'oraison du nuit, et s'alla préparer pour dire la messe, qui fut chantée en musique, ainsi que celle de curé de S. Pierre de Caen ; puis la compagnie, en continuant sa dévotion, s'en alla voir les reliques, qui sont en très grand nombre, et très précieuses. A la sortie, des religieux nous menèrent par troupes voir leur abbaye, où ils donnèrent à déjeuner au Roy, à nostre capitaine, et à quantité de nostre compagnie. L'on y voit un cloistre fort long et large, et bien lambrissé, une salle basse, où l'on faisoit autrefois les chevaliers de S. Michel, des salles très spacieuses, des dortoirs faits à droite ligne, et de beaux jardins. Il y a aussi une bibliothèque, où sont plusieurs rares manuserits. Il n'y a point d'eau dans ce lieu, mais les dits religieux ont deux eisternes, qui reçoivent la plûye du ciel : l'une est de 800 tonneaux, et l'autre de 1200. Ils en font part aux pèlerins et aux habitans du lieu, qui presque tous sont hostelliers, ou vendeurs de chapelets et de coquilles. L'on y voit encore un grand moulin, qui des chevaux font moudre, ce que est grandement commode aux dits religieux, n'y en ayant d'autre dans le Mont, et les habitans sont obligez venir leur pain des lieux voisins ; il n'y a point néanmoins cherté pour les vivres, d'autant qu'ils ne payent aucuns tributs. A nostre sortie du Mont, l'on tira les canons, et les officiers firent de grandes civilités à nostre capitaine. Estans retournés à Avrauches, où nous arrivâmes en ordre, messieurs de Canisy vinrent trouver nostre capitaine à l'hostellerie, le prièrent et nostre Roy d'aller souper chez eux, où ils invitèrent la noblesse de la ville à une table bien servie, et où l'on but à la santé de monsieur le gouverneur de Caen au bruit des tous les canons de la place.*

* “ Le voyage fait au Mont S. Michel par la confrairie de l'église de S. Pierre de Caen, avec vingt-deux ecclésiastiques, et plusieurs habitans des autres paroisses, dont Monsieur Pierre de Rosirignan, fils aîné de Monsieur de Chambay, gouverneur de la ville et chasteau de Caen, estoit le capitaine. Caen, Claud le Blanc.” (Par l'Abbé de S. Martin.)

No. VIII. PAGE 223.

The Man in the Cage.

I have conversed with old persons who asserted that they had seen the cage, as referred to in the text ; but it was destroyed several years ago. The following is the Abbé Manet's account of the matter : — “ Dans le voyage que Charles X, alors Comte d'Artois, fit, le 10 Mai, 1777, au Mont Saint-Michel, en se rendant à Brest, il ordonna la destruction de cette lourde charpente ; mais cette démolition ne fut consommée qu'en présence des jeunes princes d'Orléans, lorsqu'ils visitèrent eux-mêmes ce lieu. C'était un assemblage de solives, distantes l'une de l'autre de trois pouces, de dix pieds de long sur huit de large, et assez éloigné des murs de la cave qui le contenait, pour qu'un homme de service pût librement passer à l'entour. Louis XIV. y avait fait incarcérer le nommé Dubourg, gazetier de Hollande, qui tenait son bureau dans Francfort, et qui avait outragé grièvement le monarque. Ce malheureux, pour se distraire, dépensa beaucoup de temps et de peines à graver, à l'aide d'un clou, quelques traits grossiers de sculpture sur un des barreaux de ce cachot, où il dit, avant de mourir, que ce qui l'y avait fait souffrir davantage c'étaient les rats, dont plusieurs avaient rongé ses pieds goutteux, sans qu'il put se remuer pour se défendre. On y renferma encore depuis, pendant quelque temps, l'auteur d'une pièce de vers fort satiriques contre Madame de Pompadour.”

NO. IX. PAGE 230.

Building of Granville.

The Abbé Manet, a clever and industrious man, has the following note on Granville : —

“ Le père du Monsier dit que ce fut Philippe Badin abbé de la Luzerne, qui en 1440 mit la première pierre du bâtiment de Granville (Maeropolis, ou Grandis Villa ;) et Cenal ajoute que ce furent les Anglais qui firent cette dépense, du temps que notre roi Charles VII. était rudement hareelé par ces fiers insulaires sur plusieurs points de son royaume : ee qui s'aeorde avec les actes originaux, portant que Thomas d'Escall, alors capitaine général pour le roi d'Angleterre en Normandie, prit à fief, de Jean d'Arganges, seigneur de Gratot, le 26 Octobre 1439, tout le soe jusqu'au pont, excepte quatre perches de terre, moyennant foi et hommage, et un chapeau de roses vermeilles, payable à la Saint Jean Baptiste. Muni de ce titre, le sieur d'Eseall fit construire en ce lieu, où il n'y avait, depuis l'an 1131, que quelques chétives habitations, un chateau, dont les troupes du monarque Français s'emparèrent en 1442. Le prince, ayant jugé ce petit boulevard propre à contenir les îles anglaises voisines, y fit ajouter diverses fortifications ; et, pour y attirer le plus d'habitans qu'il pourroit, il accorda, au mois de Novembre 1445, de lettres patentes, statuant que ‘ toutes manières de gens, de quelque estat qu'ils fussent, qui voudroient venir y faire leur residence, seroient doresnavant franes, quittes, et exempts des aydes ordonnés pour la guerre, ensemble de toutes tailles, emprunt, et autres subventions et redevanees queleonques, mises ou mettre ; et que toutes places vuides seroient à leurs hoirs et successeurs perpetuellement à tous jours ; en lui faisant

pour ce telles rentes donts ses offieiers et lesdits habitans seroient convenus.' Cette concession ayant appelé dans la ville nouvelle un grand nombre de personnes, on leur y donna des emplacements pour bâtir, à raison de deux ou trois sous de cens; et elle termina par se peupler, peu à peu, ainsi que nous le voyons aujourd'hui. Elle est aetuellement de l'arrondissement d'Avranches."

THE END.

EDINBURGH :

Printed by ANDREW SHORTREED, Thistle Lane.





